The purpose of this ‘assignment’ is to present a fairly large set of observations to you concerning Irish, in the hope that they will be helpful in resolving some of the analytic and theoretical issues we are currently grappling with.

A Special Verb Class

Irish has a class of verbs (with no conventional name) which exhibit commonalities with one another in both semantic and syntactic terms. A typical exemplar is given in (1):

(1) Neartaigh ar an stoirm.
    strengthen[PAST] on the storm
    ‘The storm increased in strength.’

A fairly complete list of verbs of this type is presented in the Appendix. Please study that list.

Some, but not all, of the verbs in this class have alternates which look more like routine intransitive verbs:

(2) a. Mhéadaigh ar mo shaibhreas.
    increased on my wealth
    ‘My wealth increased.’
b. Mhéadaigh mo shaibhreas.
    increased my wealth
    ‘My wealth increased.’

Does the set of ideas we have been developing in our class discussions help you understand:

(i) why a class of verbs like this should be expected to exist,
(ii) why the members of this verb-class might be expected to show the properties that they do?

In thinking this through, it may be helpful to see how this verb-class interacts with progressive aspect. You may remember from last quarter’s work that progressive structures are formed by using the verb to be as an auxiliary and by prefixing a nonfinite form of the verb with the particle ag:

(3) Tá siad ag tógáil tithe i mBaile Átha Cliath.
    [be[PRES] they[NOM] PROG build houses in Dublin]
    ‘They are building houses in Dublin.

Our mysterious verb-class forms progressive as shown below:

(4) a. Tá ag dul dá neart.
    [be[PRES] PROG go to-his strength]
    ‘His strength is waning.’
b. Tá ag titim ar líon na mac léinn.
    [be[PRES] PROG fall on number the[GEN] students[GEN]
    ‘The number of students is falling.’

But a verb like (2b) will form a progressive as in (5b), so that we see synonymous doublets like (5a) and (5b):

(5) a. Tá ag méadú ar mo shaibhreas.
    [is PROG increase[−FIN] on my wealth]
    ‘My wealth is increasing.’
b. Tá mo shaibreas ag méadú.
   is my wealth PROG increase[-FIN]
   'My wealth is increasing.'

(5a) corresponds to (2a), while (5b) corresponds to (2b).

**The Perfective Passive**

To express recent perfective aspect, Irish uses the kind of structure seen in (6):

(6) a. Beidh an tráchtas criochnaithe agam amárach.
   be[FUT] the thesis finished at-me tomorrow
   'I'll have finished the thesis/have the thesis finished tomorrow.'

b. Tá teach ceannaithe agam.
   be[PRES] house bought by-me
   'I have bought a house.'

c. nuair a bhí an méid sin déanta
   when C be[PAST] the amount DEMON done
   'when that much was done.'

The general pattern (speaking pre-theoretically) for the formation of such examples can be roughly schematized as follows:

(i) 'The 'notional' subject appears as the object of the preposition ag
(ii) 'The 'notional' object appears as the surface subject
(iii) The aspect of the clause formed is recent perfective
(iv) 'The 'agentive' ag-phrase is systematically optional.

This should seem familiar.

Subparts of verb-object idioms may appear as surface subjects in this construction:

(7) a. Rinne sé a chóta bán
   made he his coat white
   'He made his fortune.'

b. Tá do chóta bán déanta agat.
   is your coat white made by-you
   'You have made your fortune.' (FBF 222)

In northern dialects, this is the only pattern possible. However, when we exam southern dialects (those of Munster), we see a broader range of possibilities.

With two argument verbs whose second argument is a PP, we see the pattern in (8):

(8) a. go mbeadh labhartha air féin
   c would-be spoken on[M$3] self
   'that he himself would have been spoken about (SAIL 274)

b. Bhíodh scríofa chuige roimh ré
   used-to-be written to-him in-advance
   'He used to have been written to in advance.' (NChAN 76)

c. go bhfuil diolta go ró-dhaor againn astu
   c is paid ADV too-dearly by-us out-of-them
   'that we have paid too dearly for them' (G 224)
d. Bhí cuinithe agam rót air
   was thought by-me before-you on-it
   'I had thought of it before you' (SAIL 276)

 e. bhí diúltaithe don muintearas agat
   was refused to-the family-feeling by-you
   'You had repudiated family-feeling.' (NhAOTh 69)

'Object Deletion Verbs' (verbs whose internal argument may be implicit) form perfective passives as in (9):

(9) a. Agus sula raibh ite acu agus ólta acu
   And before was eaten by-them and drunk by-them
   'And before they had eaten and drunk' (OTH 100)

 b. Nuair a bhí criochnaithe againn
   When c was finished by-us
   'When we had finished' (P 68)

 c. Bhí géillte roimh ré aige
   was surrendered before time by-him
   'He had surrendered in advance'

And the 'special class of verbs' which figured in our earlier discussion form perfective passives as shown in (10) and (11):

(10) a. go bhfuil teipithe ar an rinceoir mór
   c is failed on the dancer great
   'that the great dancer has failed' (BB 133)

 b. Bhí briste ar a fhoighid
   was broken on his patience
   'His patience had given out.' (FFF 337)

 c. go bhfuil éirighthe leis sa n-obair
   c is rose with-him in-the work
   'that he has done well in the business' (SmBN 1:40)

 d. Tá tagaithe fén bhféar
   is come under-the grass
   'The grass has become warm.' (CBG 264)

 e. Tá méadaithé ar líon na mac léinn
   is increased on number the[GEN] students[GEN]
   'The number of students has increased.'

(11) a. Bhí imithe dá neart
   was gone of-his strength
   'His strength had waned.'

 b. Nuair a bhí maolaithe ar an bpian
   when c was blunted on the pain
   'When the pain had eased'

 c. Nuair a bhí moillithe ar a rith
   when c was slowed on his run
   'When his pace had slowed'

 d. Nuair a bhí dulta den fhíon
   when c was gone of-the wine
   'When the wine had given out'
And finally, we have examples like those in (12):

(12)  

a. níos faide ná mar bhí dulta aige  
more farther than as was gone by-him  
‘farther than he had gone’ (OTH 14)  

b. tá tagaithe ós bhúr gcómhair agam  
is come before-you by-me  
‘I have come before you’ (L 9)  

c. go raibh teite lena n-anam acu  
c was fled with-their soul by-them  
‘that they had fled for their lives’ (SCh 163)  

d. nuair a bhí bogaite ag an lá  
when c was softened by the day  
‘when the day had become milder’ (cp SAIL 228)  

(13)  

a. nuair a bhí tráite sios uaidh  
when c was ebbed down from-it  
‘when the tide had ebbed down from it’ (LA 36)  

b. go bhfuil trialtha chó maith agat  
c is proved so good by-you  
‘that you have proved (to be) so good’ (SAIL 270)  

c. conus atá iompuighthe amach aige  
how is turned out by-him  
‘how he has turned out’ (L 120)  

d. tá cúlaithe ag anam náisiúnta na ndaoine  
is receded by soul national the people  
‘the national spirit of the people has receded’ (DD 33)  

(14)  

a. Cheapas arís go raibh seasta agam ar bhobghaiste  
I-thought again c was stood by-me on booby-trap  
‘I thought I had stood on a booby-trap again.’  

b. nuair a bheadh préamhaithe i gceart aíges na crainn  
when c be[COND] rooted in right by the trees  
‘when the trees would have rooted properly’ (IC 61)  

c. Ach ní raibh tosúilthe i gceart fós ag an ngeimhreadh  
but NEG was begun in right yet by the winter  
‘But the winter hadn’t started properly yet.’
(15) Laghdaigh ar a neart decreased on his strength 'His strength decreased.'
(16) Mhéadaigh ar a neart increased on his strength 'His strength increased.'
(17) Bhreisigh ar an ghluaíseacht increased on the movement 'The movement increased.'
(18) Chuir ar an stoirm put on the storm 'The storm increased (in fury).'
(19) Lagaigh air weakened on-him 'He weakened.'
(20) Neartaigh ar a sciúch strengthened on his voice 'His voice strengthened.'
(21) Threisigh ar m’iarrachtaí strengthened on my attempts 'My attempts strengthened.'
(22) Ghéaraigh ar a choiscéim sharpened on his pace 'His pace quickened.'
(23) Mhaolaigh ar a siúl blunted on their pace 'Their pace eased/slowed.'
(24) Bhrostaigh ar a siúl hurried on their pace 'Their pace quickened.'
(25) Leathnaíonn ar úsáid na Gaeilge widens on use the Irish 'The use of Irish spreads.'
(26) Mhoilligh ar a rith slowed on his run 'His pace slowed.'
(27) D’athiompaigh air turned-back on-him 'He had a relapse.'
(28) ‘Hit ar lion na mac léinn. fell on number the students 'The number of students fell.'
(29) Chlaochlaigh ar a neart deteriorated on his strength 'His strength waned.'
(30) Bhris ar a fhoighid broke on his patience 'His patience gave out.'
(31) Chaill ar a mhisneach lost on his courage 'His courage failed.'
(32) Má théann ar an airgead if goes on the money 'If the money gives out.'
(33) Thráfadh ar an spiorad sin would-ebb on the spirit DEMON 'That spirit would wane.'
(34) Feabhsáíonn air improves on-it 'It improves.'
(35) Chuairgh orthu hardened on-them 'They hardened.'
(36) Thromaigh ar a n-anacair became-heavy on their distress 'Their distress became harder to bear.'
(37) D'eirigh air rose on-him 'He became agitated.'
(38) Scoilfidh ort will-burst on-you 'You’ll burst.'
(39) Chiúnaigh ar ghibrisc na bpáistí quietened on chatter the children 'The children's chatter died down.'
(40) Theip orthu failed on-them 'They failed'
(41) Chlis orthu failed on-them 'They failed.'
(42) Sháraigh orthu overcame on-them 'They failed.'
(43) D'ilheall orm betrayed on-me 'I failed.'
(44) Chinn orthu
surpass on-them
‘They failed.’

(45) Má bheireann orm
if catches on-me
‘If I’m in a fix.’

(46) Chuaigh dá radharc
went of-his sight
‘His sight faded.’

(47) D'imigh dá neart
left of-his strength
‘His strength gave out.’

(48) Leanann dá cumhacht
follows of-her power
‘Her power persists.’

(49) Ní tháinig de
NEG came of-it
‘Nothing came of it.’

(50) Tagann fén urlár
comes under-the floor
‘The floor is drawing damp.’

(51) Dhubháigh aige
became-black at-him
‘He became depressed.’

(52) Ghormaigh aige
became-blue at-him
‘He became depressed.’

(53) Chuaigh agam
went at-me
‘I succeeded.’

(54) D'éirigh go maith leis
rose well with-him
‘He did well.’

(55) Rith leis
ran with-him
‘He did well.’

(56) Shroich leis
reached with-him
‘He succeeded.’

(57) Tiocfaidh as na brístí
will-come out-of the trousers
‘The trousers will stretch.’

(58) D'éirigh eatarthu
rose between-them
‘They fell out (quarreled).’

(59) Thoisigh eatarthu
began between-them
‘They fell out (quarreled).’

(60) Théigh fá dtaoibh don ghirseach
warmed about-the girl
‘The girl became hot and bothered.’

(61) Tháinig insa ghasúr
came in-the boy
‘The boy grew up.’

(62) Bhreáthaigh ar an aimsir.
became-fine on the weather
‘The weather got better.’

(63) Dheallraigh air go raibh sé buartha.
looked on-him c was he upset
‘He seemed to be upset.’

(64) Thriomaigh ar na foinsí.
dried on the sources
‘The sources dried (up).’

(65) Ba ag éadromú uirthi a bhí.
past PROG lightening on-her C was
‘It was becoming lighter (losing weight) she was.’

(66) D'fhuaí a ghrá Airt di.
became-cold on love Arthur[GEN] for-her
‘Arthur’s love for her went cold.’

(67) Chríonnaigh ar na mná.
became-old on the women
‘The women aged.’

(68) go gcúngóidh orthu
c become-narrow[FUT] on-them
‘that they will become narrow’

(69) ar eagla go séidfeadh air
on fear C blow[COND] on-it
‘for fear that a storm would blow up’

(70) Gealann ar Pheadar.
brightens on Peter
‘Peter’s mood brightens.’