

ON THE CLEFT SENTENCE AND THE ‘NOMINALIZED’ SENTENCE IN IRISH ¹

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I. Introduction

The aim of this study is to show the difference between the cleft sentence and the sentence that is thought to be a quasi-cleft sentence, namely, ‘nominalized’ sentence in Irish language. In the first part of this paper, their difference in Modern Irish will be shown. We will overview their historical development in the latter half of this paper.

We encounter a number of cleft sentences used in prose texts in Modern Irish language. Many languages have ‘clefting’ as one of the pragmatic strategies, to make the focus element prominent. In Irish, the cleft sentence consists of [**copula** (*is*) + **noun** (underlined part) + *relative clause* (part in italics)] as illustrated in (1), which is a Modern Irish example:

- (1) **Is** é Seán *a* *cheannaigh an leabhair.*
IS.pres. he Seán REL.PRT. buy.pret. the books
‘It is Seán that bought the books.’

We also notice the cleft sentence without the copula *is* at the head of the sentence used in prose texts in Irish language. The sentence consists of [**noun** (underlined part) + *relative clause* (italics part)] as illustrated in Modern Irish example (2):

- (2) Seán *a* *cheannaigh an leabhair.*
Seán REL.PRT. buy.pret. the books
‘It is Seán that bought the books,’ or ‘Seán bought the books.’

¹ The first part of this paper is the revised version of the oral presentation at the 128th meeting of the Linguistic Society of Japan, held in Tokyo Gakugei University (Tokyo) on June 19 and 20, 2004. This Paper is mainly based on my MA thesis (Nakamura 2004).

In this study, a sentence like (2) is called a ‘nominalized’ sentence for it consists of a noun phrase solely at first sight.

In literatures such as Christian Brothers (1960, 1962) and Ó Siadhail (1988, 1989) and so forth, the ‘nominalized’ sentence is thought to derive from the cleft sentences in Modern Irish. In other words, it was thought that, in ‘nominalized’ sentences, the copula was deleted at the beginning of cleft sentences. Two of the previous literatures, however, noticed their difference, namely Stenson (1981) and McCloskey (1979). Stenson (1981: 108ff.) stated that ‘since the copula may be deleted from any cleft sentence (provided it is present tense and not being questioned or negated), the parallel between cleft sentences and wh-questions is even more obvious, if the comparison is made with cleft sentences in which deletion has taken place. Indeed, one of the commonest situations for copula deletion is the clefted answer to a wh-question, suggesting that the opposition between old and new information that the copula expressed has already been established by the question itself.’ McCloskey (1979: 91ff.) states as follows: ‘one difference between full and reduced cleft² is that indefinite NP may not appear in the focus-position of full clefts, but may appear in the focus-position of reduced clefts.’ Observe his examples:

- (3) **Capall mór bán a chonaic mé.**

horse big white REL.PRT. see.pret. I

‘It was a big white horse that I saw.’ (McCloskey 1979: 90)

- (4) ***Is capall mór bán a chonaic mé.**

IS.pres. horse big white REL.PRT. see.pret. I

‘It was a big white horse that I saw.’ (McCloskey 1979: 91)

Although the difference between cleft sentences and ‘nominalized’ sentences is clearly indicated in previous literatures, I argue that they failed to fully explain the problem. The reason is that neither Stenson (1981) nor McCloskey (1979) described which kind of noun is unacceptable to come in the beginning of ‘nominalized’ sentence. And neither Stenson (1981) nor McCloskey (1979) examined their informational difference at all. In the next chapter, their formal difference and the informational difference in Modern Irish will be provided.

² McCloskey (1979) called ‘nominalized’ sentence as ‘reduced cleft,’ which means that he regards the ‘nominalized’ sentence is derived from the cleft sentence.

II. The Difference between the cleft sentence and the ‘nominalized’ sentence

2.1. Formal difference

First, we will discuss the formal difference between the cleft sentence and the ‘nominalized’ sentence. If the ‘nominalized’ sentence is the cleft sentence without the copula, then we will anticipate that a ‘nominalized’ sentence can be derived from any cleft sentences under any conditions. However, it is not always the case. See the example in (5).

- (5) **Is é a cheannaigh an leabhair.**
IS.pres. he REL.PRT. buy.pret. the books
‘It was him that bought the books.’

In the example (5), pronoun *é* ‘he’ follows the copula *is*. If the ‘nominalized’ sentence is derived from the cleft sentence, the ‘nominalized’ sentence (6) would also be grammatically accepted. On the contrary, (6) is unaccepted.

- (6) ***É a cheannaigh an leabhair.**
he REL.PRT. buy.pret. the books
‘He bought the books.’

Consider the sentence (7). Sentence (7) is a ‘nominalized’ sentence in which the noun phrase at the beginning of the sentence is a part of the antecedent of *dó* ‘to him’.

- (7) **An scoláire seo a gceannaíonn an múinteoir leabhair dó.**
the student this REL.PRT. buys the teacher books to him
‘It is to this student that the teacher buys books.’
or ‘To this student the teacher buys books.’

Since the ‘nominalized’ sentence (7) is grammatical, the cleft sentence (8) would also suppose to be grammatical. However, sentence (8) is ungrammatical.

- (8) *Is é an scoláire seo a gceannaíonn an múinteoir
 IS.pres. he the student this REL.PRT. buys the teacher
leabhair dó.
 books to him
 ‘It is to this student that the teacher buys books.’

2.2. Informational difference

Next, we will examine the difference between the cleft and the ‘nominalized’ sentence in terms of informational structure in Modern Irish. Cleft sentences have a unique informational structure type, namely, **focus+presupposition** type. On the other hand, the ‘nominalized’ sentence has four types of the informational structures: **focus+presupposition**, **presupposition+focus**, **focus+focus** and **no focus** types. If the cleft sentence and the ‘nominalized’ sentence had the same identity, they could freely be altered under the same context. On the contrary, however, the following data will provide a different observation.

Before we move on to the data, some definition should be given. The notion of ‘focus’ and ‘presupposition’ is differently used in papers. Some defined them in terms of phonetics, i.e. intonation or accent, and others defined by their context or discourse. This paper will stand on the latter definition. ‘Focus’ is the information that is the most important on account of picking out the information suitable for the ‘presupposition’. ‘Presupposition’, on the other hand, is the information that the speaker and hearer have in common, for the presupposition is established in the previous context.

2.2.1. Focus+presupposition type

Both the cleft sentence and the ‘nominalized’ sentence have this informational structure type, **focus + presupposition** type. Observe the following cleft sentence (9).

- (9) Ba é Cóilín Mhúirne a labhair. (SS)
 IS.pret. he Cóilín Mhúirne REL.PRT. speak.pret.
 ‘It was Cóilín Mhúirne who spoke.’

(Context: ‘How can we stop the churl?’ ‘By murdering him tonight,’ said a voice behind me. Everybody startled. I turned around.)

In (9) above, *é Cólín Mhúirne* ‘he, Cólín Mhúirne’ is picked up because the one named *Cólín Mhúirne* is a suitable information for the presupposition that someone addressed that he or she would murder ‘the churl,’ which means ‘Cólín Mhúirne’ is picked up and identified as the one who made the suggestion to murder ‘the churl.’ Because of that, ‘Cólín Mhúirne’ is a focus and the information that someone said that he or she would kill ‘the churl’ is a presupposition because it is established in previous context and the speaker and the hearer should have the information in common. Now, observe the sentence (9)’.

- (9) Cólín Mhúirne a labhair.
 Cólín Mhúirne REL.PRT. speak.pret.
 ‘Cólín Mhúirne spoke.’

Sentence (9)’ is a ‘nominalized’ sentence. If a ‘nominalized’ sentence is derived from a cleft sentence, we will imagine that the ‘nominalized’ sentence (9)’ can be made by deleting the copula *is* at the beginning of the cleft sentence (9). And we would assume that (9) and (9)’ could be used under the same context without problem. In fact, (9) and (9)’ can freely be altered in the same condition according to native Irish speakers, but (9) and (9)’ are different in one aspect, i.e. the context in which they are used. As Stenson (1981: 108ff.) has stated, the ‘nominalized’ sentence is frequently used for an answer of wh-questions. Observe (10) below:

- (10) Cad is ainm duit? --- Chiye is ainm dom.
 what IS.pres.REL. name to you Chiye IS.pres.REL. name to me
 ‘What is your name?’ ‘My name is Chiye. (lit. Chiye is a name to me.)’

The ‘Nominalized’ sentence is used for the answer of the wh-question ‘what is your name?’ in this example. In (10), the information that the hearer has a name is naturally established, which means that this information is a presupposition, and ‘Chiye’ is selected as a suitable information for the presupposition. Therefore ‘Chiye’ is a ‘focus’. In the same way as (9)’, let us construct a cleft sentence as in (10)’.

(10)' #Is **Chiye** *is ainm dom.*

IS.pres. Chiye IS.pres.REL. name to me

'It is Chiye that is my name.'

By Irish speakers, cleft sentence (10)' is not used in the same context as 'nominalized' sentence (10), since the cleft sentence (10)' has a contrastive meaning, for example, 'my name is **Chiye** and not the other name!' In this respect, the cleft sentence does not have the same property as 'nominalized' sentence.

2.2.2. Presupposition+focus type

Next, we will be looking at **presupposition+focus** informational structure type. Only the 'nominalized' sentence has this type and the cleft sentence does not have this type of the informational structure.

(11) **Tusa,** *atá chomh sean leis na cnoic,* agus **mise**
 you+contr. REL.PRT.+TÁ.pres. as well as old with the hill and I+contr.

a bhfuil aois seanmháthar agam cheana féin! (DS)

REL.PRT TÁ.pres age Of old woman at me as well

'You are as old as the hill and I have the age of old woman as well.'

(Context: Abraham heard God voice saying 'Sarah will have a son in nine month.' Abraham told the story to Sarah. Sarah smiled.)

Sentence (11) is an example of a 'nominalized' sentence. In this sentence, pronouns with a contrastive marker *-sa*, that is, *tusa* 'you (contrastive)' and *mise* 'I (contrastive)' are the speaker and the hearer respectively and we could treat both of them as presupposition. And the information 'the speaker and the hearer are elder' is a focus in respect that they are not young. If the 'nominalized' sentence was a cleft sentence, we would expect that cleft sentence would also appear in the same condition in (11)'.

- (11) #Is tusa, atá chomh sean leis na cnoic, agus
 IS.pres. you+contr. REL.PRT.+TÁ.pres. as well as old with the hill and
 is mise a bhfuil aois seanmháthar agam cheana féin!
 IS.pres. I+contr. REL.PRT TÁ.pres age of old woman at me as well
 ‘It is you that is as old as the hill and it is me that has the age of old woman as well.’

However, the cleft sentence (11)’ is not acceptable in the same context as in (11).

2.2.3. Focus+focus type

This time, we will look at **focus+focus** informational structure type. Only the ‘nominalized’ sentence has this type of informational structure as shown in (12).

- (12) An bhfuil ualach agatsa?
 INTER.PRT. TÁ.pres. load at you-contr.
 ‘Do you have a load?’
 — Leathphaca mine a bheidh agam. (AO)
 a half pack of meal REL.PRT. TÁ.cond. at me
 ‘I would have a half pack of meal.’ (A dialogue of people talking at the port.)

In (12), the ‘nominalized’ sentence is used as an answer to the question ‘have you got your load?’ When the speaker uttered this sentence, there is no information in common for speaker and hearer in advance, for the speaker does not know whether the hearer has got his or her load yet. Therefore, using the ‘nominalized’ sentence, the hearer responds that he or she will have a half pack of meal but has not got it yet. In the ‘nominalized’ sentence, *leathphaca mine* ‘half pack of meal’ is a focus without doubt, and *a bheidh agam* ‘which I will have’ is also a focus so that the hearer and speaker do not have the information in common.

If we alter this ‘nominalized’ sentence into cleft sentence, what we get is below.

- (12) #Is leathphaca mine a bheidh agam.
 IS.pres. a half pack of meal REL.PRT. TÁ.cond. at me
 ‘It is a half pack of meal that I would have.’

However, the cleft sentence (12)' is not available in the same context as (12), which means that the 'nominalized' sentence is not derived from the cleft sentence by deleting the copula *is*.

2.2.4. No focus type

Finally, we will take a look at **no focus** information structure type, which only the 'nominalized' sentence carries. The 'nominalized' sentence of this informational type is found in the introductory part of stories or dialogue. The 'nominalized' sentence of this informational structure type is used more frequently than that of other informational structure types.

- (13) **Ceithre bhliana** gan lá chuige nó uaidh, *a* ***bhí***
 four year-old not a day more or less REL.PRT. TÁ.pret
Séimí Phádraig Duibh nuair a cuireadh chun na scoile é. (CO)
 Séimí Phádraig Duibh when put.pret.aut. toward the school him
 'When Séimí Phádraig Duibh was put toward the school, he was just four years old.'

The 'nominalized' sentence (13) stands in the very first part of the story. Because it is used for the introduction of the story, it has no previous context. Obviously, it contains neither focus nor presupposition. If you use the cleft sentence for the 'nominalized' sentence, you will have (13)' as follows.

- (13)' #Is **ceithre bhliana** *a* ***bhí*** ***Séimí Phádraig Duibh***.
 IS.pres. four years old REL.PRT. TÁ.pret Séimí Phádraig Duibh
 'It was four years old that Séimí Phádraig Duibh was.'

Native Irish speakers will feel awkward if the cleft sentence (13)' is used in the very beginning of the story.

III. Preliminary of cleft sentence and 'nominalized' sentence

In the previous chapter, we have seen the formal and informational difference between cleft sentences and 'nominalized' sentences in Modern Irish language. Now we can conclude that the 'nominalized' sentence is not derived from the cleft sentence. This

argument so far may well cause a problem, ‘how cleft and “nominalized” sentences have developed historically?’ This chapter will shed light on this problem.

3.1. Cleft sentence

Through the history of the Irish language, cleft sentences are commonly used in prose texts. The structure of cleft sentence is the same as the one in the Modern Irish period (from 17th century onwards). Example (14) is in Old Irish (from roughly the beginning of the 8th to the middle of the 10th century A.D.), example (15) in Middle Irish (c. mid-10th to late 12th century A.D.), and example (16) in Classical Modern Irish (which is a subdivision of Modern Irish and posited from the end of 12th to the end of 17th century).

(14) **Is** **hed** *rofoilsiged* *dosuib.* (Wb. 21^e15)

IS.pres.3sg it manifest.prf.pass. to them

‘This is what has been manifested to them.’

(15) **Is** **mé** *dorinól* *in stúagad-sa.* (TBC, 26)

IS.pres.3sg I muster.prf.3sg.REL. the hosting.sg.acc

‘It is I who have mustered this hosting.’

(16) **Is** **é** *ro mharb* *an Searbhán Lochlannach ...*

IS.pres.3sg him kill.prf.3sg.REL the Searbhán Lochlannach (TDG. 1224)

‘It was he who killed the Searbhán Lochlannach ...’

3.2. ‘Nominalized’ sentence

As for the ‘nominalized’ sentence, there are not many ‘nominalized’ sentences found in Old Irish, as far as I know.

(17) **Tol** **cholno** *forchanat.* (Wb. 20^e20)

will.sg.nom./acc. of flesh teach.pres.3pl.REL

‘It is the will of the flesh that they teach.’

Approaching to the late Old Irish or Middle Irish period, we will find ‘nominalized’ sentences as in examples (18), (19), (20). Example (21) is a Classical Modern Irish example.

- (18) **Condla** **cerd** **Brigte** *ro-triall* *du Ruaim.* (BB. 25)
 Condla craftsman of Brigit attempt.pret.3sg. to Rome
 ‘Condla, Brigit’s craftsman, attempted to go to Rome.’
- (19) **Mo** **poba** **Fergus** *dotháet* *and* ... (TBC, 2721)
 my master Fergus come.pret.3sg.REL there
 ‘That is my master Fergus, coming ...’
- (20) **Cú Chulaind** *ro-d-lá* *ocus*
 Cú Chulaind cast.prf.3sg-it and
 it é a eich *geltatar* *in-mag-so.* (TBC. 271)
 IS.pres.3pl it his horses eat.prf.3sg’ the-plain land-this
 ‘In fact, it is Cú Chulainn who has cast it and it is his horses which grazed this plain.’
- (21) **Inghean** **Rí** **Éreann** *do élódh* *leam*
 daughter of King of Ireland flee.prf.3sg. with me
 ó Fhionn mac Cubhail ó-na hathair ... (TDG. 489)
 from Fionn mac Cumhaill from-her father
 ‘The daughter of the king of Ireland has fled with me from Fionn mac Cumhaill and from her father.’

In his magnificent work of Old Irish Grammar, Thurneysen (1946) clearly states that ‘the copula is often omitted, especially when it would have been a form of the third person indicative (Thurneysen (1946: 494ff.)).’ Unfortunately, he has no example of ‘nominalized’ sentence in his work.

3.3. ‘Pronoun insertion rule’

As we have seen in 3.1 and 3.2, cleft sentences were sporadically used through all the period of Irish language but, on the other hand, ‘nominalized’ sentences seem to be one of the innovatory features of Middle Irish language onwards. As Thurneysen (1946: 494ff.) indicates, the copula is easily omitted when its form is in the third singular present form. Why do we rarely find the ‘nominalized’ sentence in the Old Irish period? The answer seems to lie in ‘pronoun insertion rule.’

What is the 'pronoun insertion rule'? It is a general rule in Irish language of all period, which is applied only to the copula sentences. In Modern Irish, the 'pronoun insertion rule' is obligatory in some dialects and is optional in the other dialects. See examples in Modern Irish. Copula sentences have a word order of **[copula+predicate+subject]**³ in general. When the subject is a definite noun, such as noun with definite article or proper noun and so forth, and also when the predicate is an indefinite noun, then the third person pronoun is inserted just before the subject, as in example (23). The gender and number of the inserted pronoun should be agreed with that of the subject. (The inserted pronoun is in the square, the predicate is underlined and the subject is in italics.)

- (22) **Is** scoláire *mé*. 'I am a student.'
 IS.pres. student I (predicate: scoláire, subject: mé)
- (23) **An** scoláire í *Máire?* 'Is Máire a student?'
 IS.pres.INTER. student she Máire (predicate: scoláire, subject: Máire)
- **Is** scoláire í *Máire*. 'Máire is a student.'
 IS.pres. student she Máire (predicate: scoláire, subject: Máire)

When both the subject and predicate are definite nouns, or when the subject is the third person pronoun and the predicate is a definite noun, a pronoun will be inserted before the predicate, as in example (24) and (25) respectively.

- (24) **An** é an teach bán *an leabharlann?*
 IS.pres.INTER. it the building white the library
 'Is the library the white building?' (predicate: an teach bán, subject: an leabharlann)

³ The story is not straightforward and we will encounter one problem. If the predicate is a definite noun, and if the first or second person pronoun appears as the subject, the subject precedes the predicate, i.e. the word order will be **[copula+subject+predicate]**. 'Pronoun insertion rule' is not applied to this type of the word order.

An thusa *Seán?* 'Are you Seán?'
 IS.pres.INTER. you-contr. Seán

- (25) **An** **Chiye** *i?* 'Is she Chiye?'
 IS.pres.INTER. she Chiye she (predicate: Chiye, subject: í)
- **Is** **Chiye** *í.* 'She is Chiye.'
 IS.pres. she Chiye she (predicate: Chiye, subject: í)

In the older language, on the other hand, the 'pronoun insertion rule' seems to be optional. Thurneysen (1946: 492ff.) states that 'as a rule the copula stands immediately in front of the predicate. But where the latter is a definite nominative other than a personal pronoun --- i.e. (a) a substantive defined by the article, a possessive pronoun or a definite genitive, or (b) a proper noun, or (c) a substantival demonstrative --- then, a pronoun of the third person is inserted between the copula and the predicate.' In (26), the pronoun is inserted before the predicate 'm-ort' (inserted pronoun is in the square) but in (27) it is not inserted before the definite predicate 'fochuín ícce.'

- (26) **is-hé** **m-ort** *inso* (Wb 29^d25)
 IS.pres.3sg-he my-rank this

'This is my rank.' (predicate: m-ort, subject: inso)

(Glosses in Old Irish to the Latin Holy Bible, 'In quo positus sum ego praedicator et apostolus et magister gentium.') ('Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.' 2 Tim. I. 11)

- (27) **Is-fochunn** **Ícce** **dúib-si** *foditiu na-n*
 IS.pres.3sg.-reason of Salvation to you.pl.-contr. enduring of the
ingremmen. (Wb 23^o6)
 of persecution

'A cause of Salvation to you is the enduring of the persecutions.'

(Glosses in Old Irish to the Latin Holy Bible, 'uobis autem salutis.') (And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. Php. I. 28)

Let us go back to the discussion on the cleft sentence and the 'nominalized' sentence here. In Old Irish, 'pronoun insertion rule' is optionally applied to cleft sentence as well. Observe the sentences below. In these examples, 'pronoun insertion rule' is applied in (28) but not in (29), even though the predicate is the same noun, *día* 'God.'

'nominalized' sentence in later language has developed from the cleft sentence without the pronoun insertion. As the statement of Thurneysen (1946: 483ff.) shows, 'the forms of copula are always unstressed, and hence are very much reduced.' Historically, the 'nominalized' sentence is derived from the cleft sentence without the pronoun insertion by deleting the copula *is* at the beginning of the sentence.

IV. Conclusion

In this paper, we have made an attempt against the prevailed notion that the cleft sentence and the 'nominalized' sentence is identical in Modern Irish. As the examples show, the cleft sentence and the 'nominalized' sentence are different in their formal feature and informational structure. Throughout the history of the Irish language, however, the cleft sentence is used whereas the 'nominalized' sentence is quite rare in the Old Irish period. It will not be denied that the 'pronoun insertion rule' and the 'nominalized' sentence have an important correlation. In this paper, I argued that the 'nominalized' sentence is derived from the cleft sentence in historical perspective.

Abbreviation

acc.	accusative	aut.	autonomous form
cond.	conditional form	contr.	contrastive marker
INTER.	interrogative form	INTER.PRT.	interrogative particle
IS.	copula	nom./acc.	nominative or accusative
pass.	passive form	pres.	present tense
pret.	preterite	prf.	perfect
REL.	relative form	REL.PRT.	relative particle
sg.	singular	TÁ.	substantive verb
3pl.	third person plural	3sg.	third person singular
1 Cor.	I Corinthians	Php.	Philippians
Rom.	Epistle to the Romans	2 Tim.	II Timothy

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(English translation by D. A. Binchy and O. Bergin. 1946. *A Grammar of Old Irish*. Revised and enlarged edition with supplement. Reprint in 1998. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.)

Text

Modern Irish (From 17th century onwards.)

- AO = Ó Criomhthain, T. 1929. *An tOileánach*. Baile Átha Cliath: Helicon Teoranta.
- CO = Ó Grianna, S. 1924. *Caisleáin Óir*. Cork: Mercier Press.
- DS = Hastings, C. 1998. *Dea-Scéala*. Indreabhán: Cló Iar-Chonnachta.
- SS = Maguire, D. 1968. *Short Stories of Padraic Pearse, a Dual Language Book*. Cork: Mercier Press.

Classical Modern Irish (From the end of 12th to the end of 17th century.)

- TDG. = Ní Shéaghdha, N. ed. 1967. *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne*. Dublin: Irish Texts Society. (A text in 1651.)

Middle Irish (From c. mid-10th to late 12th century A.D.)

- TBC = O' Rahilly, C. ed. 1976. *Táin Bó Cúailnge, Recention I*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. (A text in c. 1100-1135.)

Old Irish (From roughly the 8th to the middle of the 10th century A.D.)

- Wb. = 'Codex Paulinus Wirzburgensis.' in Stokes and Strachan, 1975. *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, Vol.1. pp.499-714. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. (A text around 700 A.D.)
- BB. = Ó hAodha, D. ed. 1978. *Bethu Brigte*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. (A text in the first half of 9th century.)
- MU. = Watson, J.C. ed. 1983. *Mesca Ulad*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. (A text in the first half of 12th century.)
- TBF. = Meid, W. ed. 1974. *Táin Bó Fraích*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. (A text in the second half of 12th century.)

The Holy Bible King James Version Bible. (E-text in HTML. <http://www.englishbible.org/bible/kjv/>)

アイルランド語の分裂文と「名詞句文」

中村 千衛

要旨

アイルランド語の分裂文は[コピュラ+名詞+関係節]で成り立つ。アイルランド語では同時に[名詞+関係節]で成り立つ文も散見される。名詞句のみで成り立つという意味で、本稿ではこのような文を「名詞句文」と呼ぶ。これまで現代アイルランド語に関してなされてきた先行研究において、「名詞句文」は分裂文の文頭からコピュラが省略されることによって派生したとされてきた。しかしながら、考察してみると、現代アイルランド語の分裂文と「名詞句文」は(i)形式的な側面から、(ii)情報構造の側面から両者が交替不可能であることが分かった。形式的な面からは 1. 文頭に代名詞が生じた「名詞句文」は非文法的である一方で、分裂文でコピュラに後続する要素が代名詞である文は文法的であること、2. 関係節内部で前置詞句の一部となっている要素が分裂文でコピュラに後続する場合に、「名詞句文」と分裂文で容認度に違いが見られること、の2点が観察できる。情報構造の面からは分裂文が[焦点+前提]から成る情報構造のみを持つ一方で、「名詞句文」は[焦点+前提]、[前提+焦点]、[焦点+焦点]、[焦点なし]の4つの情報構造を持つことが分かった。従って、現代アイルランド語では「名詞句文」は分裂文の文頭からコピュラを省略した文ではないと結論付けた。

一方、歴史的な変遷に目を向けてみると、初期の古期アイルランド語において見られなかった「名詞句文」が後期の古期アイルランド語および中期アイルランド語の散文テキストに見られるようになる。これに対して分裂文はアイルランド語のすべての時代を通じて広く使われてきた。アイルランド語のコピュラ文に適用される「代名詞挿入規則」に注目すると、古期アイルランド語のデータでは随意的であったけれども、後の時代になるに従って、より義務的になったことがデータから分かる。現代アイルランド語では分裂文と「名詞句文」は異なる性質を持つけれども、歴史的な観点からは「名詞句文」は「代名詞挿入規則」が適用されなかった分裂文から派生したということを示唆した。

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