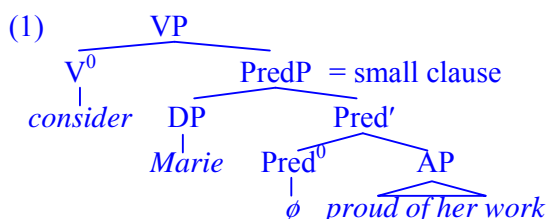


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YN ABSENTIA
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1. INTRODUCTION: THE SYNTACTIC THEORY OF MEDIATED PREDICATION

Bowers 1993, 2001: all predication must be mediated by a functional head Pred^0 (originally, Pr°). The small clause is a projection of this head (PredP).



Empirical evidence: predicate case-marking (Bailyn and Rubin 1991, Bailyn and Citko 1999, Bailyn 2001, 2002) and copular particles, as well as some finer details of small-clause syntax

The semantic function of Pred is to create a predicate out of an entity-correlate (or some such construct): APs, NPs and PPs are hypothesized to not denote predicates, and therefore require conversion into predicates (Bowers 1993 citing Chierchia 1985, Chierchia and Turner 1988)

NB: Both Bowers 1993, 2001 and den Dikken 2006 take the extreme position, though for different reasons: verbal predication must also be mediated by a functional head. We will not address this complication here.

Bowers 1993, Baker 2003: the Welsh particle *yn* is an overt realization of Pred°

2. WELSH COPULAR PARTICLE

Initial confirmation: *yn* clearly appears in small clauses

Primary predication:

- (2) a. Mae Siôn **(yn)* ddedwydd. Rouveret 1996:128
 is Siôn PRT happy
 Siôn is happy.
- b. Y mae Siôn **(yn)* feddyg.
 PRT is Siôn PRT doctor
 Siôn is a doctor.

Secondary predication: ECM, resultatives and depictives:

- (3) Rydw i'n ystyried [Siôn yn niwsans]. Zaring 1996
 am I+PROG consider John PRED nuisance
 I consider John a nuisance.
- (4) a. Peintia'r petryal bach yn goch.
 paint-IMP+the rectangle small PRED red
 Paint the small triangle red.

Acknowledgments: Many thanks to Bob Morris Jones for the Welsh data and discussing possible theories with me.

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- b. Dw i'n licio cwrw yn oer. Bob Morris Jones, p.c.
be-1SG I+PROG like beer PRED cold
I like beer cold.

Absolute constructions (cf. Chung and McCloskey 1987 for Irish):

- (5) A mi yn ofnus, ni ddywedais ddim. Rouveret 1996
and I PRED shy NEG said nothing
Since I am shy, I said nothing.

NP-internal **reduced relatives** (Willis 2006):

- (6) buddsoddi ym mhensaernïaeth fy ngwlad, yn hen ac yn newydd
invest.VN in architecture my country PRED old and PRED new
to invest in the architecture of my country, old and new.

To the best of my knowledge, scholars working on Welsh haven't investigated the hypothesis that *yn* is Pred°:

- Hendrick 1984, 1996: the predicative *yn* is Asp°, just like the progressive *yn* and the perfective *wedi* (homophonous with the prepositions 'in' and 'after'; as noted by Awbery 1976, Sproat 1985 and Fife 1990:368-386, 422-442, among others, the predicative, progressive and propositional *yn* all induce different mutations)
- Rouveret 1996: the predicative *yn*, the progressive *yn* and the perfective *wedi* all introduce stage-level predicates (but see Zaring 1996 for the demonstration that individual-level and stage-level adjectives retain their properties with *yn*)
- Gensler 2002: the predicative *yn* is the same item as the adverbializing *yn* (which is, alas, not very explanatory)

Historically, the structure with *yn* is an innovation, spreading from the depictive use (Gensler 2002, Borsley, Tallerman and Willis 2007)

Crucially for us, in some environments *yn* is conspicuously absent:

- when the predicate is a PP
- when the predicate is moved to [Spec, CP]
- before equative and intensive (*so*, *such*) degree operators

What are the consequences of this distribution for the hypothesis that the *yn* is Pred°?

3. PP AND ASPP PREDICATES

PP predicates and AspPs when *be* functions as an auxiliary **disallow** *yn* (Jones and Thomas 1977:47, Jones 2009):

- (7) a. Mae Siôn (*yn) yn Lludain /o flaen y tŷ. Zaring 1996
is Siôn PRT in London of foremost the house
Siôn is in London/in front of the house.
- b. A hwy yn yr eglwys, ysbeiliwyd eu tŷ. Rouveret 1996
and them in the church was-looted their house
While they were in the church, their house was looted.
- (8) a. Y mae'r ffermwr wedi cau y glwyd. Rouveret 1996
PRT is-the farmer PERF shut the gate
The farmer has shut the gate.
- b. Mae dyn yn siarad efo Mair.
is man PROG speak to Mair
A man is speaking to Mair.

This is completely consistent with cross-linguistic lexicalization patterns for copular particles and copular verbs (Hengeveld 1992, Stassen 1997, Pustet 2005):

- (i) No lexicalization with VPs, unless they are derivationally converted into nouns or adjectives
- (ii) No copular particles with PPs; a special copular or stance verb is often required
- (iii) Lexicalization with APs only if lexicalization with NPs. The copular particle may be the same (Welsh) or it may be different (Edo)

A good theory of Pred° should **explain these patterns**. Doing so requires going beyond the simple assertion that Pred° mediates predication and providing it with a proper role.

My hypothesis: the correlation in (iii) has to do with the fact that in different languages or within the same language adjectives can be "more verbal" or "more nominal" -- it is the latter category that may require an overt mediator in the predicative position

4. WELSH ADJECTIVES AS NOUNS

I'm only aware of two languages demonstrably using a copular particle with AP predicates: Edo and Welsh. With NP predicates this is considerably more frequent. Why?

Proposal: **Welsh adjectives are close to nouns** and, like nouns, require support to appear in the predicate position.

Support: The distributional properties of Welsh adjectives bring them close to nouns.

4.1. Nominal adjectives

Cross-linguistically, adjectives may be more or less nominal/verbal (contra Baker 2003).

Japanese adjectives are divided into "verbal" and "nominal" (cf. Kageyama 1982, Miyagawa 1987, Kubo 1992, Nishiyama 1999, etc.), of which only the latter require an overt copula:

(9) Canonical ("verbal") adjectives Japanese

- a. yama-ga takai.
mountain-NOM high.PRES
The mountain is high.
- b. yama-ga takakatta.
mountain-NOM high.PAST
The mountain was high.

(10) Nominal adjectives

- a. yoru-ga sizuka-da.
night-NOM quiet-COP.PRES
The night is quiet.
- b. yoru-ga sizuka-datta.
night-NOM quiet-COP.PAST
The night was quiet.

Bantu languages also have two classes of adjectives, agreeing ("real", or "verbal") and non-agreeing ("nominal"), distinct from nouns and verbs (Doke 1927, Posthumus 2000, Stassen 1997:168, Matushansky and de Dreu 2009):

- (11) a. Ngi- mu- hle. “agreeing adjective”: Zulu
AGRS1SG- AA1- beautiful
I am beautiful.
- b. Ngi- ngcono. “non-agreeing adjective”: Zulu
AGRS1SG- improved
I am better.
- c. Ngi ng- u- mfana. NP predicate: Zulu
AGRS1SG- PRED- AUG- boy
I am a boy.

In **Zulu**, NP predicates require a copular particle, while AP predicates don't.

4.2. Adverbs

Welsh doesn't have any adverbializing suffix: AP-internal modification is done by another adjective either directly or with the help of the preposition *of*, and VP-internal modification requires an additional marker homophonous with the predicative *yn*.

4.3. Prepositions

Welsh adjectives can **appear with the prepositions** *yn* ‘in’ (yielding adverbs that can modify VPs, but not APs) and *o* ‘of’ (yielding AP-internal modification):

- (12) a. Fedrith o redeg yn gyflym. Jones 2009
can.PRES.3SG he run in quick
He can run quickly.
- b. arbennig o ddiddorol
special of interesting
especially interesting

The adverbializer *yn* triggers lenition (soft mutation, like the predicative *yn*) rather than nasal mutation (which is what the prepositional *yn* does), so the question arises if such adverbs are in fact depictives. The answer is no:

- (13) Oedden nhw 'n ffyrnig yn achlysurol. Jones 2009
be.IMP.3PL they PRED fierce in occasional
They were occasionally fierce.

A few nouns (*andros* ‘devil’, *coblyn* ‘goblin’, and *syndod* ‘surprise’) and locative expressions (*dros ben* ‘over head’ and *(y) tu hwnt* ‘beyond’) can also occur in the configuration of (12b).

4.4. AP-AP modification

Welsh **adjectives can be modified by adjectives** directly, just like nouns (Jones 2009)

- (14) a. tawel rhyfeddol b. syniad rhyfeddol
quiet strange idea strange
strangely quiet *a strange idea*
- (15) a. swnllyd ofnadwy b. noson ofnadwy
noisy awful evening awful
awfully noisy *an awful evening*

VP-modification can't be done by an AP (unlike, say, in Hebrew or in German), so adjectives and adverbs are not homophonous in Welsh.

A two-level modification (*most awfully noisy*) is not allowed for any adjective positions (see Jones 2009), but this could be in part pragmatic (cf. ^{??}*[incredibly awfully] noisy*) or linked to the fact that direct AP-AP modification is restricted.

4.5. AP position

Adjectives can appear either before or after nouns and adjectives they modify (Rouveret 1994, Sadler 2000 and Willis 2006, among others). This is determined on the lexical basis:

- (16) a. *dadansoddiad cymharol* default
analysis comparative
comparative analysis
- b. *cymharol ifanc*
comparative young
comparatively young
- (17) a. *penderfyniad difrifol*
decision serious
serious decision
- b. *difrifol wael*
serious ill
seriously ill
- (18) a. *fy hoff hen gi* exceptional
my favourite old dog
my favourite old dog
- b. *tawel rhyfeddol*
quiet strange
strangely quiet

Adjectives appearing before the constituents they modify trigger lenition.

VP adverbs must appear after the VP, except if functioning as frame adverbials (Jones 2009).

4.6. Lenition in the feminine

Mittendorf and Sadler 2006: Welsh feminine nouns trigger lenition on the following AP (the first word thereof):

NB: The mutation on *pwysig* ‘important’ in (19c) is not the “soft-mutation” (lenition) but the aspirated mutation, caused by the adverb *tra* ‘very’.

- (19) a. *cath ddu fawr* UR: cath du mawr
cat.FSG black big
a big black cat
- b. *agwedd bwysig* UR: agwedd pwysig
aspect.FSG important
(an) important aspect
- c. *agwedd dra phwysig* UR: agwedd tra pwysig
aspect.FSG very important
(a) very important aspect

The feminine adjective, however, can in turn trigger lenition on its own modifier (Jones 2009, citing Thomas 1996:221):

- (20) a. noson wyntog ddychrynlyd
night.F windy frightening
a frighteningly windy night
- b. diwrnod gwyntog dychrynlyd
day.M windy frightening
a frighteningly windy day
- (21) a. merch gas gythreulig
woman.F nasty devilish
a devilishly nasty woman
- b. dyn cas cythreulig
man.M nasty devilish
a devilishly nasty man

If the Welsh adjectives behave like nouns in this respect, the explanation is straightforward.

4.7. Compounding

Welsh compounding is also head-initial and the second member undergoes lenition if the first member is feminine:

- (22) a. siop fara
shop bread
baker's (shop)
- b. siop gig
shop meat
butcher's (shop)

Given the cross-linguistic similarity between compounding and modification, this extra lack of a difference is encouraging.

4.8. Comparatives and equatives

Gensler 2002 also emphasizes the similarity between adjectives and nouns: "compared forms exist not just for adjectives but also for a number of nouns (Williams 1980:33-34). Thus, with the superlative: *pen* 'head', *penn-af* 'chief'; *ôl* 'track, rear', *ol-af* 'last'; *diwedd* 'end', *diweth-af* 'last'. And with the comparative: *lles* 'benefit', *lles-ach* 'more advantageous'; *amser* 'time', *amser-ach* 'more timely'; *elw* 'profit', *elw-ach* 'more profitable'. As for the equative degree, the morphological equative form also has a nominal meaning: *teg* 'beautiful', *cyn dec-ed* 'as beautiful as' (with lenition after *cyn* 'as'), *tec-ed* '(degree of) beauty'."

5. INTERMEDIATE SUMMARY

The subcategorization properties of *yn* are fully consistent with it being a copular particle.

The hypothesis that **copular particles subcategorize for nouns and nominal adjectives** is not contradicted by Welsh: Welsh adjectives and nouns are clearly very similar.

Restricting copular particles to predicates headed by **nouns and nominal adjectives** seems to be **inconsistent with the hypothesis that the copular particle is Pred°** (under the standard view of Pred° as the head of any small clause).

However, it makes perfect sense if the main function of nouns is **classificatory rather than ascriptive** -- predication is primarily ascriptive (while identity is primarily classificatory).

The remaining two *yn*-less environments don't change the picture.

6. WELSH PREDICATE FRONTING

Rouveret 1996, Zaring 1996, etc.: when the predicate is fronted, the particle *yn* disappears:

- (23) a. Ffeind wrth bawb ydy Mair. Jones 1993 via Rouveret 1996
kind to everyone is Mair
Mair is kind to everyone.
- b. Meddyg yw Sion. Rouveret 1996
doctor is Sion
Sion is a doctor.

In addition, the copula is not clause-initial and the form of the copula is different.

Does the new form of the copula reflect the incorporation of the putative Pred°?

Perhaps, but this form is also used in the **equative copula**, where there is no evidence for the presence of *yn*:

- (24) a. Y brenin yw Arthur. Rouveret 1996
the king is Arthur
Arthur is the king.
- b. Arthur yw'r brenin.
Arthur is-the king
It is Arthur who is the king.
- c. *Y mae Arthur yn y brenin.
PRT is Arthur PRED the king

... and when *yn* is clearly **not incorporated** (after clause-initial negation, question particle or *if*):

- (25) a. A ydyw Ifan yn bregethwr? Rouveret 1996
Q is Ifan PRED preacher
Is Ifan a preacher?
- b. Nid yw Ifan yn saer. Williams 1980:94
NEG is Ifan PRED carpenter
Ifan is not a carpenter.

More likely conclusion: the copula form *yw* reflects the **movement of the copula to C°** (but see Zaring 1996 for the hypothesis that it is also the lexical copula).

If the predicate is a PP (or an AspP), the *mae* form must be used:

- (26) a. Yn Llundain (y) mae Siôn. Zaring 1996
in London PRT is John
John is in London.
- b. *Yn y dre yw/ydy Gwyn. Borsley, Tallerman and Willis 2007
in the town be.PRES.3SG Gwyn
(‘Gwyn is in town.’)

...except after clause-initial negation, question particle or *if*.

Summary: Welsh predicate fronting says nothing about the syntactic or semantic role of *yn*; while its absence from inverted structures can be attributed to incorporation into *be*, this is not an explanation and has nothing to do with it being or not being Pred°

Its **absence from identity clauses** somewhat supports the hypothesis that *yn* is Pred°.

7. EQUATIVES AND INTENSIVES

Welsh equatives can be simultaneously inflected and analytic, depending on the choice of the morpheme, dialect and register: “*mor* is more characteristic of southern dialects and would not typically occur in formal Welsh.” (Jones 2009):

- (27) a. cyn/mor dal-ed â Sioned Jones 2009
so/as tall-EQ with Sioned
as tall as Sioned
- b. mor/(*cyn) ddeallus â Sioned
so/as intelligent with Sioned
as intelligent as Sioned

Neither *mor* nor *cyn* are compatible with *yn*:

- (28) a. Mae Gwen mor gryf(ed) â Megan. Jones 2009
be.PRES.3SG Gwen as strong(-EQ) with Megan
Gwen is as strong as Megan.
- b. Mae Gwen cyn gryfed â Megan.
be.PRES.3SG Gwen as strong-EQ with Megan
Gwen is as strong as Megan.

Mor is ambiguous between the intensifying ‘so’ and the equative ‘as’; *cyn* is equative only:

- (29) a. Mae Gwen mor gryf(ed).
be.PRES.3SG Gwen so strong
Gwen is so strong.
- b. *Mae Gwen cyn gryf(ed).
be.PRES.3SG Gwen so strong

Only *mor* can take a standard CP:

- (30) Mae ’r tywydd mor/*cyn wyntog heddiw fel bod rhaid cau ’r bont.
be.PRES.3SG the weather so/as windy today like be necessity close the bridge
The weather is so windy today that the bridge has to be closed.

Why is *yn* absent?

The most straightforward answer: it’s a category issue: ***mor* and *cyn* are prepositions.**

- Support: *cyn* is homophonous with the preposition ‘before’.
- Problem: *mor* is not homophonous with anything. And though it triggers lenition, just like many prepositions, so do many degree words, such as *rhwy* ‘too’

A less likely hypothesis: ***mor* and *cyn* involve covert movement** (cf. Heim 2000).

Degree interrogatives are formed by using the interrogative word *pa* ‘which, what’ and the degree word *mor* ‘so’ combined with an adjective:

- (31) a. Pa mor bell ydy Porthmadog? Jones 2009
which so far be.PRES.3SG Porthmadog
How far is Porthmadog?
- b. Pa mor dda ydy Ryan Giggs?
which so good be.PRES.3SG Ryan Giggs
How good is Ryan Giggs?
- c. Pa mor dal ydy Mair?
which so tall be.PRES.3SG Mair
How tall is Mair?

The obligatory absence of *yn* results from fronting (note the suppletive form of *be*).

Could the same explanation apply to equatives?

Problem: **all** degree operators are incorrectly predicted to disallow *yn*, as the hypothesis that degree operators involve QR treats comparatives and equatives alike:

- (32) a. Mae Sioned yn dal-ach na Gwen. Jones 2009
be.PRES.3SG Sioned PRED tall-er than Gwen
Sioned is taller than Gwen.
- b. Mae Aberystwyth yn llai na Llundain.
be.PRES.3SG Aberystwyth PRED smaller than London
Aberystwyth is smaller than London.

Degree modification in *cweit* 'quite', *go* 'fairly', *rhy* 'too' and *reit* 'exceedingly' and analytic comparison in *mwyr* 'more, lit. bigger' and *llai* 'less, lit. smaller' behave exactly the same.

8. CONCLUSION AND FURTHER QUESTIONS

The subcategorization properties of the Welsh copular particle *yn* are consistent with what we know about copular particles in general

The cross-linguistic hierarchy in the lexicalization of copular particles (NP predicates before AP predicates) doesn't follow from the hypothesis that the copular particle is Pred°

The hypothesis that copular particles only appear with nominal adjectives is supported by the Welsh data.

Bi-nominal copulas may be classificatory (including identity) or ascriptive (predicational), which is often cross-linguistically encoded.

From the semantic point of view, it is unlikely that nominal adjectives are more classificatory than "normal adjectives" -- the difference in encoding **doesn't seem functional**.

The absence of the copular particle in inversion structures remains a mystery.

9. APPENDIX 1: A FEW MORE WORDS ON THE WELSH INVERSION

Any (though only one) constituent can be inverted. Descriptions of the effects of inversion on the interpretation vary.

Gensler 2002 notes no genericity, transience, lifetime, stage-level, etc., effects.

Tallerman 1996 claims that the resulting focus is "mild" and the topic interpretation is also possible.

Rouveret 1996 claims that DP₁ is the focus:

- (33) a. Pwy yw eich ffrind? - Myfanwy (yw fy ffrind).
who is your friend - Myfanwy is my friend
'Who is your friend?' - 'Myfanwy is.'
- b. Pwy yw Myfanwy? - Fy ffrind (yw Myfanwy).
who is Myfanwy my friend is Myfanwy
'Who is Myfanwy?' - 'She is my friend.'

Borsley, Tallerman and Willis 2007: While normally overt material in [Spec, CP] is assigned contrastive focus, DP₂ in identity copular clauses is not.

note: Propositional adverbs, such as *efallai* 'perhaps', *hwyrach* 'probably', *braidd* 'hardly' and *prin* 'hardly', also appear in this position without being contrasted (Borsley, Tallerman and Willis 2007:124)

With predicational copulas the fronted constituent is contrastive:

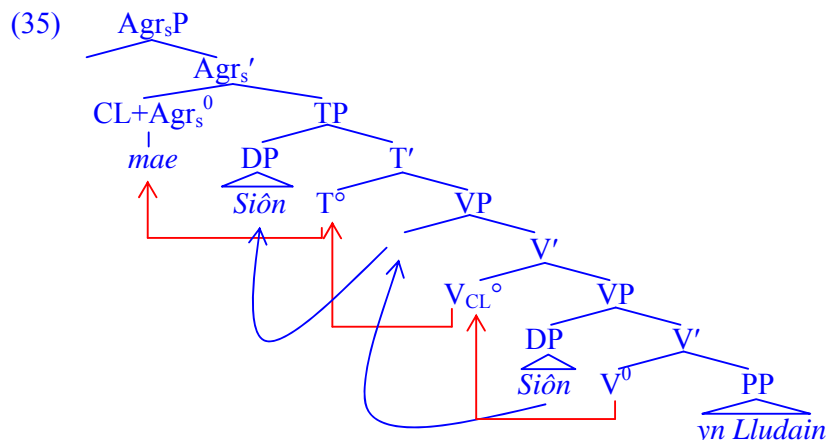
- (34) a. Mae Caerdydd yn ddinas hardd. Borsley, Tallerman and Willis 2007
be.PRES.3SG Cardiff PRED city beautiful
Cardiff is a beautiful city.'
- b. Dinas hardd yw Caerdydd.
city beautiful be.PRES.3SG Cardiff
Cardiff is A BEAUTIFUL CITY.
- c. Caerdydd sy 'n ddinas hardd.
Cardiff be.PRES.REL PRED city beautiful
It's Cardiff that's a beautiful city. / CARDIFF is a beautiful city.

note: the verbal form *sydd* arises whenever the subject is wh-moved. This form is compatible with the particle *a* (in C°) and doesn't require the special focus-embedding complementizer (cf. Zaring 1996), unlike the *yw* form, suggesting that the verb does not move to C° when the subject is in [Spec, CP]

10. APPENDIX 2: ROUVERET'S UNIFIED ANALYSIS OF THE WELSH COPULA

Rouveret 1996 distinguishes two types of predication in Welsh: stage-level (with the copula *mae*) and individual-level (elsewhere)

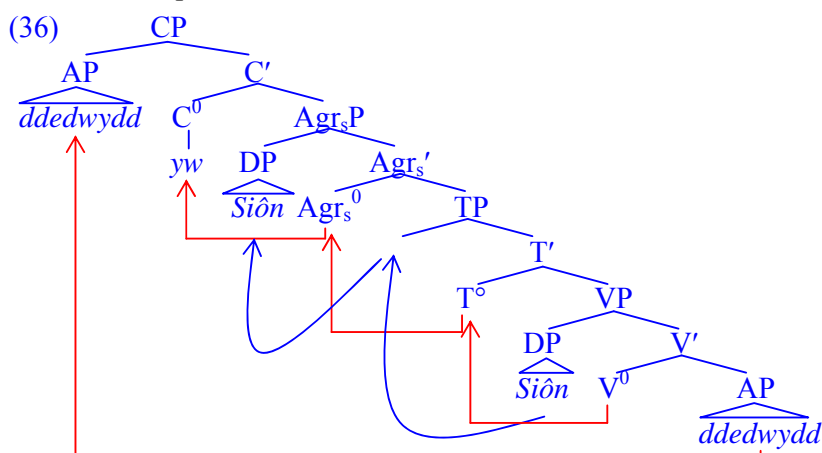
The structure of *mae*-predication:



Key points:

- the form *mae* contains an incorporated locative clitic
- the small clause is represented as a Larsonian shell
- the head-movement of the verb renders the subject and the predicate equidistant
- [Spec, TP] is filled by the subject in locatives, by the predicate in existentials
- the role of the copular particle *yn* is not discussed

In inverted copular clauses there is no locative clitic:



Key points:

- there is no basic difference between equative and predicational copular clauses
- the role of the copular particle *yn* is not discussed
- identificational clauses are derived by moving the subject to [Spec, CP]; as this cannot be right (the copula never agrees with the element in [Spec, CP]; subject extraction gives rise to a different form of *be*, cf. (34c)), it is simpler to assume the reversal of order inside the small clause. On the other hand, this special form is only used with non-definite predicates...

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