IRISH CONSTRUCTIONS WITH *BAIN*[*]

VICTOR BAYDA

0. Introduction

Irish has a large number of constructions consisting of a verb of general meaning (a light verb), a noun (usually abstract) and a preposition:

(1)   *Chuir   sé   áthas   orm*
         put.PAST he/it happiness on-me
         'He/It made me happy'

These light-verb constructions (LVCs) form a unit: the light verb fulfils the grammatical functions while also retaining some of its lexical semantics, and the noun conveys the core semantics of the whole, so that the meaning of the predicate is distributed among the parts of the construction. The tendency to use periphrastic means of conveying predicates in Irish has been discussed by Wagner (1959) and Greene (1966) and the same phenomenon has recently been discussed by Wigger (2004, 2008 and 2009) from a contrastive and lexicological point of view. LVCs containing verbal nouns (NV-LVCs) have been discussed by Bloch-Trojnar (2009a, 2009b and 2010) with particular stress on their aspectual characteristics and the interaction between the verb-noun predicate and the choice of the light verb. The present paper is intended as an attempt to introduce LVCs involving simple (non-verbal) nouns into the discussion.

1.1 Discussions of light-verb constructions

Periphrasis as an important strategy in Irish was mentioned by Heinrich Wagner in *Das Verbum in den Sprachen der Britischen Inseln*:

> *[F]ür unsere finite deutschen Verben „lieben, hassen, sich freuen, sich wundern, sich fürchten, hungern, frieren" und viele andere gibt es im Irischen keine finite Verben sondern nom.-verb. Ausdrücke, die mit dem Verbum subst. oder der Copula umschrieben werden.*

(Wagner 1959: 33)

Wagner himself mentions James Munroe's *Practical Grammar of Scottish Gaelic* (1843), where structures involving the copula (e.g. *is féidir leis* 'he

---

can') are called 'composite verbs'. However, in Wagner's view the reduction to copula phrases is not necessary (Wagner 1969: 44). He divides state verbs into three groups: B1 (a small group of finite verbs), B2 (verbal-nominal, i.e. with a verbal noun, e.g. *tá sé ina shuí*) and B3 (nominal-verbal, e.g. *is maith liom*, *tá a fhios agam*). B2 have mainly stative or iterative meanings and B3 comprise expressions of feelings and modal expressions (Wagner 1969: 35). He does not mention various kinds of verbal-nominal phrases with verbs other than the copula and the substantive verb. This might be due to the classification, which concerns only purely stative meanings and as such does not include predicates such as 'make happy', 'frighten' or 'surprise'. In any case, the latter predicates, being verbal-nominal, fit the classification nicely. Importantly, Wagner argues that the meaning of these expressions depends on the whole construction and does not depend on a single part of sentence (Wagner 1969: 44). This makes them semantically single units.

David Greene notes that Irish can be called a 'noun-centered' language as it often uses nouns where other languages use other parts of speech, but of the sort of constructions discussed in this paper he only mentions expressions with the substantive verb, although he does mention that a noun can also be used to express actions (see his example, *ligim fead* 'I let a whistle') (Greene 1966: 31, 44-5).

Ailbhe Ó Corráin, working along the lines proposed by Wagner, builds a classification of how different predicate meanings are expressed in Irish. Having divided states into contingent (e.g. 'be done') and non-contingent ('be angry', 'be hungry', 'have'), he notes that the former tend to be rendered adjectivally, whereas the latter are rendered nominally (Ó Corráin 2001: 169-170). He does not include examples of predicates like 'get angry' or 'become hungry', so it is not clear if these expressions are considered to be nominal. However, the nominal status of the element conveying the core semantics of *tháinig fearg air* 'he got angry' (lit. 'came anger on-him') seems undisputed and as such fits Ó Corráin's classification.

The aforementioned scholars take semantics as their starting point and show that state-predicates tend to be expressed by use of nominal constructions. It remains unclear, however, whether periphrastic-nominal encoding is an exclusive feature of state predicates. Maria Bloch-Trojnar has shown that, if the verb with which a verbal noun is associated is denominative, it is substituted in an LVC with the simple noun. This means that verbal nouns used for non-denominal verbs in such structures must similarly be purely nominal (Bloch-Trojnar 2008). LVCs with verbal nouns do not involve the substantive verb as the light verb, so there might seem to be a clear line between NV-LVCs and structures mentioned before. However, there are a large number of nouns which can be used both with the substantive verb and with (other) light verbs, and sometimes even with the copula:

(2)   *Is   ionadh liom*
      COP.PRES surprise with-me
      'I am surprised'

(3)   *Tá   ionadh orm*
      be.PRES surprise on-me
      'I am surprised'

(4)   *Chuir   sé   ionadh orm*
      put.PAST he/it surprise on-me
      'He/It surprised me'

Simple nouns therefore link different constructions.

An extensive collection of constructions with the verbs *bain* 'extract, remove', *cuir* 'put', *déan* 'do, make', *gabh* 'take, go', *lean* 'follow, continue', *lig* 'let', *tabhair* 'give', *tar* 'come' and *téigh* 'go' has been gathered by Dónall Ó Baoill and Tomás Ó Domhnalláin (1975). Although they are referred to in the work as combinations of verbs and prepositions, the constructions are sub-typed according to the types of nouns with which they have a particular meaning. There is little discussion of the material in the work. An important point is, however, made in the foreword – that these combinations form a sort of unit with a special meaning ("*saghas aonaid a mbíonn ciall faoi leith leis*") (Ó Baoill and Ó Domhnalláin 1975: 7), that is, that they are idiomatic.

The difficulty of dealing with these structures, as pointed out by Arndt Wigger, lies in the fact that they are lexical rather than grammatical phenomena, with the borders between lexical and grammatical being at times hard to determine. Discussing various kinds of such phenomena (with the copula, the substantive verb as well as with 'vague' verbs like *bain*, *cuir*, *tabhair* etc.), he argues that they are "not simply a long list of single cases, an additional vocabulary of formal complex verbs, but rather a limited number of more or less strongly used patterns, at least from a formal point of view, but in part clearly from a semantic one too" (Wigger 2004: 5). An outline of how the diversity in such phenomena can be dealt with is given in Wigger 2009 by grouping constructions according to the degree of their constraints: (a) syntactically free, (b) syntactically bounded, (c) semantically free, (d) metaphorical, (e) phraseological. Wigger (2009: 8) notes that in a cross-classification there are many complex or intermediary types.

The attention to systematicity in verb periphrasis in Irish is an important move as it deals with a typologically characteristic feature of Irish that has hitherto received little scholarly attention.

1.2. The approach

This article presents an attempt at applying some insights from a recent approach in linguistics usually referred to as 'Construction grammar' to the study of Irish. The main theoretical idea of this approach is that language consists of constructions understood as conventionalised pairings of form and meaning. This provides a unified view of language's inventory of units as constructions on a lexicon-syntax continuum, a 'constructicon', thus removing the border between vocabulary and grammar. Constructions have meanings of their own that are responsible for the choice of units that can fit the constructions and they can even impose a particular meaning onto words which they would otherwise not have outside the construction.[1] There are various opinions as to whether a constructional approach is valid for all language structures or only for the idiomatic ones. This, however, is not essential for the present article, as the LVCs discussed here will be shown to have particular features that belong to the constructions themselves and so can qualify as idiomatic. The various idioms are situated on a continuum between two types – substantive, or lexically filled, where no component can be substituted (e.g. *spill the beans*), and schematic, or lexically open, where certain positions can be filled by various units (e.g. [clause *let alone* clause], see Fillmore, Kay and O'Connor 1988). LVCs discussed in this article will be shown to be schematic idioms with a pattern [*bain* N Prep]. In the following the structures in question will be referred to as 'constructions' throughout, as the light-verb status of *bain* is not essential for the analysis. For an overview of Construction grammar see Croft and Cruse 2004: 225-327 and Hoffman and Trousdale 2013.

The examples in the article have been extracted from the electronic corpus *Nua-Chorpas na hÉireann*, accessible online. The nouns in the lists are mainly taken from Ó Baoill and Ó Domhnalláin 1975.

2. The constructions

2.1 Free combinations with *bain*

The present article focuses on LVCs which consist of the verb *bain* 'extract, remove' and the two prepositions most associated with this verb, *as* 'out of' and *de* 'off'. The basic meaning of *bain* can be exemplified by the following two sentences:

(5)   *Bhain   sé an leabhar as   an mála.*
        extract.PST he DEF book   out of DEF bag
        'He took the book out of the bag'

---

[1] Cf. the explanation by Goldberg 2006: 73 of the intransitive verb 'sneeze' becoming transitive in 'Pat sneezed the foam off the cappuccino' due to it being placed into a caused-motion construction.

(6) *Bhain   sé an   clúdach den   bhord.*
     remove.PST he DEF cloth   off-DEF table
     'He took the cloth off the table'

Here the meaning of both sentences is purely compositional and *bain* denotes more or less the same type of action, namely 'causing the object to be absent from the locus denoted by the prepositional phrase'. The minor differences in meaning reflected in the translation are connected to the type of locus – a container or a surface – which is clear from the use of the prepositions. The verb itself seems to be of a more abstract kind to be sensitive to such nuances. It is also important to note at this point that both the direct object and the indirect object can be either definite or indefinite, the choice depending on purely pragmatic reasons.

2.2.1 The [*bain* N$_{def}$ *as*] construction
There are a large number of phrases in Irish which involve the verb *bain*, but seem to build their semantics on different grounds than in the examples in 2.1.

(7) *Bhain   sé sult   as   an   gcóisir.*
     bain.PST he enjoyment out of DEF party
     'He enjoyed the party'

Here the meaning of *bain* cannot be interpreted as 'causing the object to be absent from the locus', as there is no physical object that is moved or removed. The direct object slot is occupied by an abstract noun denoting a particular state of the subject, while the direct object is not a locus but a stimulus. This interpretation differs radically from the examples in 2.1, whose meanings were compositional. The semantics of this phrase is less compositional as the verb does not mean 'extract, remove' and the use of the preposition *as* 'out of' is not connected to the type of object – a party can only metaphorically be seen as a container.

In principle, the object of *bain* in free combinations can be both definite and indefinite, cf. *bhain sé an leabhar as an mála* 'he took the book out of the bag' and *bhain sé leabhar as an mála* 'he took a book out of the bag'. This does not hold, however, for the [*bain* state *as* stimulus] construction as **bhain sé an sult as an gcóisir* is ungrammatical. As this restriction is not predicted by general Irish syntax it must belong to the construction.

2.2.2 The direct object – beneficial characteristics
There are in principle four semantic types of nouns that can occupy the direct object slot in the aforementioned construction.

Nouns of benefit
leas 'benefit'[2]   *bain leas as* 'use, take advantage of'
tairbhe 'benefit, profit'   *bain tairbhe as* 'benefit from'
buntáiste 'advantage'   *bain buntáiste as* 'take advantage of'
feidhm 'function'   *bain feidhm as* 'use'
úsáid 'use'   *bain úsáid as* 'use'

Nouns of enjoyment
sult 'enjoyment, fun'   *bain sult as* 'enjoy'
spórt 'fun'   *bain spórt as* 'enjoy'
só 'luxury, comfort'   *bain só as* 'be in comfort'
ceol 'music'   *bain ceol as* 'have fun, enjoy'
sásamh 'satisfaction'   *bain sásamh as* 'enjoy'
taitneamh 'enjoyment'   *bain taitneamh as* 'enjoy'

Nouns of meaning
ciall 'sense, reason'   *bain ciall as* 'make sense of'
brí 'meaning'   *bain brí as* 'interpret'
tuiscint 'understanding'   *bain tuiscint as* 'get an understanding'
meabhair 'mind'   *bain meabhair as* 'understand, grasp'

Nouns of revenge
díoltas 'revenge'   *bain díoltas as* 'take revenge'
sásamh 'satisfaction'   *bain sásamh as* 'get even with'
cúiteamh 'compensation'   *bain cúiteamh as* 'get even with'

In all these combinations the subject is the experiencer/beneficiary (that is, the subject is inactive, unlike with the free use of *bain*). The object denotes the beneficial characteristic that is in the subject's domain and the indirect object refers to a stimulus. The last group may seem to be at odds with the rest, but the logic is quite clear in this case too, as the noun refers to the satisfaction of having got even with someone which is in the subject's domain.

It is worth noting that all the characteristics denoted by the nouns in the direct object position are beneficiary or positive to the subject. This restriction is not self-evident, as negative characteristics might also have been used in this construction: they share the same semantics as the positive characteristics except for the polarity itself. The construction in question clearly sets a restriction on the semantics of nouns allowed in this slot.

2.2.3 The direct object – situations
The direct object position can be occupied by nouns having a predicative component in their semantics and denoting various types of situations.

---

[2] The lists of nouns given in the article are by no means exhaustive and there are many other nouns that can fill the positions in the constructions in question.

Light, sound, vapour
macalla 'echo'   *bain macalla as* 'echo'
ceol 'music'   *bain ceol as* 'play'
gal 'vapour'   *bain gal as* 'make produce smoke'

Outcry
béic 'outcry'   *bain béic as* 'make someone scream'
búir 'roar'   *bain búir as* 'make someone roar'
scread 'scream'   *bain scread as* 'make someone scream'

Movement, deformation
casadh 'turning'   *bain casadh as* 'give a turn'
síneadh 'extension'   *bain síneadh as* 'extend, stretch'
croitheadh 'shake'   *bain croitheadh as* 'give a shake'
fáscadh 'squeeze'   *bain fáscadh as* 'give a squeeze'

Various activities
obair 'work'   *bain obair as* 'make someone work'
siúl 'walk, go'   *bain siúl as* 'make someone/something go/move'
comhrá 'conversation'   *bain comhrá as* 'get someone talking'
damhsa 'dance'   *bain damhsa as* 'make someone dance'
preabarnach 'jumping'   *bain preabarnach as* 'make someone jump'
rith 'run'   *bain rith as* 'make someone run'

Uncontrolled action
gáire 'laugh'   *bain gáire as* 'make someone laugh'
deora 'tears'   *bain deora as* 'make someone cry'
snag 'sob'   *bain snag as* 'make someone sob'
geit 'shock'   *bain geit as* 'startle, take aback'
preab 'jump'   *bain preab as* 'give someone a start'

These constructions are different from the ones in 2.2.2 in that they are causative and the semantic roles of the arguments reflect this: the subject is an active causer and the indirect object is the causee. The nouns in the direct object position are predicative and denote situations, either directly using verbal nouns or indirectly using nouns that are not derived from the appropriate verbs. It is the semantic type of nouns in the direct object slot that trigger a causative interpretation, as the make-up of the construction is the same as in the beneficial construction in 2.2.2.

2.2.4 The two [*bain* N$_{indef}$ *as*] constructions
The interpretation of a particular instantiation of the [*bain* N$_{indef}$ *as*] construction depends on the semantic type of the noun in the direct object slot: a noun denoting a beneficial state or characteristic triggers a beneficial reading, whereas a predicative noun triggers a causative one.

One will notice that among the nouns listed in the beneficial constructions there are also predicative nouns: *sásamh* 'satisfaction', *taitneamh* 'enjoyment', *tuiscint* 'understanding', *úsáid* 'use'. The reason why they do not trigger causative readings is because they are licensed here due to their semantic proximity to other words which partake in the beneficial constructions, e.g. *sult* 'enjoyment' (for *sásamh* and *taitneamh*), *ciall* 'meaning, sense' (for *tuiscint*) and *feidhm* 'use' or *leas* 'use' (for *úsáid*). In other words, the interpretations of particular instantiations of constructions are accounted for by recognising similarity associations between the lexical units that fill their slots.

Another case that poses questions is the various interpretations possible where the same noun is used: *bain ceol as* 'have fun, enjoy' or 'play (a musical instrument)'. If we apply the construction analysis to particular uses of *bain ceol as*, we will have to take into account the semantic role of the indirect object. This removes the ambiguity because the indirect object in the beneficial construction must be a stimulus and in the causative a causee. Depending on whether the indirect object can be interpreted as a stimulus (e.g. a party) or as a cause (e.g. 'an instrument' in the case of *ceol* 'music') a beneficial or causative meaning is triggered.

One more point concerns the relations between various instantiations of a construction. The group of constructions with nouns of understanding, for example, includes such semantically transparent cases as *bain tuiscint as*, lit. 'extract understanding out of', or *bain míniú as*, lit. 'extract explanation out of', but also idiomatic *bain adhmad as*, 'make sense out of', lit. 'extract wood out of'. That all three of these phrases follow the same pattern and have similar meaning is quite clear. What distinguishes them is that the latter is more idiomatic (non-compositional) than the former two. This clearly shows that a construction accounts for word combinations which occupy different places on a continuum between more and less idiomatic. This approach covers in a more flexible way what could be called collocations on the one hand and fixed idioms on the other, giving due recognition to the clear similarities in their structure and semantics.

We will now notice that the noun in the direct object slot is necessarily indefinite. This restriction is only violated in two cases, namely, when the noun is relativised or qualified by a singling-out adjective. In both cases the definiteness of the direct object does not really reflect pragmatics, but rather is 'forced' onto the noun by the general syntax, while the noun remains non-referential:

(8)   *Níor bhain sé an chiall ghnách as na drochfhocail*
        'He didn't understand/use the rude words in the usual sense'

(9)   *Na gasúir a bhain an sult ba mhó as*
      'It was the children that enjoyed it most'

(10) *Is minic cur síos fada sna cuntais chéanna ar an taitneamh agus an spórt a bhaintear as na cluichí*
      'One can often find long descriptions in the same accounts of how people enjoyed the games'

(11) *Ba léir nár bhain Máire Mhac an tSaoi an sásamh as an leabhar a bhain Dáithí*
      'It was clear that Máire Mhac an tSaoi did not enjoy the book as much as Dáithí did'

(12) *dá mbainfeadh na seandaoine an úsáid cheart as a héifeacht*
      'If the old people had used her effort rightly'

(13) *Is iontach an leas a bhaineann páiste óg as ábhar ón timpeallacht*
      'A little child can use the material around him wonderfully'

(14) *Ba mhór an sásamh a bhain sé as na radharcanna a chonaic sé ar dhá thaobh an bhóthair ar a thaisteal ó dheas*
      'He enjoyed greatly the views that he saw on either side of the road as he travelled southwards'

2.3.1 The [*bain* N$_{def}$ *as*] construction

As noted above, the noun in the direct object slot in the [*bain* N *as*] constructions is necessarily indefinite in the case of beneficial and causative constructions. The definiteness of the direct object marks a different construction, as its semantics differs from the beneficial and causative ones, as also do the nouns which occupy the direct object slot. These usually refer to an inherent quality of the indirect object:

an mhaith 'the good'	*bain an mhaith as* 'take the good out of, destroy'
an t-olc 'the bad'	*bain an t-olc as* 'take the sting out of'
an bhrí 'the strength'	*bain an bhrí as* 'take the strength out of'
an ghoimh 'the venom'	*bain an ghoimh as* 'remove the venom'
an bród 'the pride'	*bain an bród as* 'take away the pride'
an cotadh 'the shyness'	*bain an cotadh as* 'take the shyness away'
an leisce 'the laziness'	*bain an leisce as* 'take the laziness away'

(examples from Ó Baoill and Ó Domhnalláin 1975)

Some of these phrases do not occur in *Nua-Chorpas na hÉireann*, but others with similar meaning and structure do:

an dochar 'the harm'	*bain an dochar as* 'take the harm out of, make harmless'

an cealg 'the guile'	*bain an chealg as* 'take the guile out of, make guileless'
an urchóid 'the harm'	*bain an urchóid as* 'take the harm out of, make harmless'

(15) *ach go ndearna sé é seo ar bhealach magúil spraíúil a bhain an urchóid as*
'but he did it in a joking and joyful manner that made it harmless'

As noted above the nouns in this construction always denote some inherent quality of the indirect object and are definite. The semantics of the construction is that of eliminating a quality and the indirect object is conceptualised as a container out of which the quality is removed.

It might be interesting to compare some minimal pairs of [*bain* N$_{indef}$ *as*] and [*bain* N$_{def}$ *as*] constructions. There are not many cases where the same noun could be used in both cases, but this is the case with *brí* at least:

bain brí as 'to interpret in some way, make sense of'
bain an bhrí as 'to render senseless'

(16) *dá dheacracht ar an gcailín brí a bhaint as caint na seanmhná*
'however difficult it was for the girl to make sense of what the old lady was saying'

(17) *ba ghairid gur dhúirt Niall cupla focal eile a bhain an bhrí as an méid a bhí ráite go dtí sin aige*
'soon Niall said something else that rendered senseless what he had said before that'

The [*bain* N$_{indef}$ *as*] construction triggers a beneficial reading ('make sense'), whereas [*bain* N$_{def}$ *as*] triggers a quality-eliminating meaning ('render senseless'). In the following example, *brí* is definite, but this is because it is qualified by an adjective whose meaning narrows the range of referents to a single one (there can be only one correct meaning), and because of that *brí* does not switch over from a beneficial to a quality-eliminating interpretation:

(18) *Má bhíonn an iomarca daiseanna i dteilgean bíonn sé deacair an bhrí cheart a bhaint as*
'if there are too many dashes in a phrase, it can be difficult to understand correctly'

2.3.2 The [*bain* N$_{def}$ *de*] construction
Another construction that includes *bain* and in which the direct object is always definite employs a preposition different to the cases described above – *de* 'off'.

brón 'grief'	*bain an brón de* 'make someone stop grieving'
fearg 'anger'	*bain an fhearg de* 'make someone stop being angry'
imní 'worry'	*bain an imní de* 'make someone stop worrying'
ocras 'hunger'	*bain an t-ocras de* 'make someone stop feeling hungry'
codladh 'sleep'	*bain an codladh de* 'make someone sleepless'
mórtas 'pride'	*bain an mórtas de* 'humble someone's pride'

The semantics of these constructions is very similar to that of the [*bain* N$_{def}$ *as*] construction – metaphorical removal of a characteristic. It also shares the requirement that the direct object be definite. The formal difference lies in the preposition, while the semantic difference is that the characteristic in this case is not an inherent quality, but rather a temporary state, a feeling or an emotion. These constructions could therefore be called 'state-eliminating'.

Nouns denoting activities also occur in this construction:

caint 'speech'	*bain an chaint de* 'leave someone speechless'
siúl 'movement'	*bain an siúl de* 'slow down, decelerate'

In these cases there is a modal component in the meaning, that of 'ability to speak' or 'ability of moving (fast)'.

There are some examples of minimal pairs of a [*bain* N$_{indef}$ *as*] construction and a [*bain* N$_{def}$ *de*] construction:

bain siúl as 'make someone go on a journey'
bain an siúl de 'slow down, decelerate'

Again, the [*bain* N$_{indef}$ *as*] construction triggers a causative meaning, whereas the [*bain* N$_{def}$ *de*] construction triggers a state-eliminating meaning (here the state being the 'ability to move fast'). Similarly *bain caint as* 'get someone to talk' versus *bain an chaint de* 'leave someone speechless'.

2.3.3 Qualities and states
The difference between the [*bain* N$_{def}$ *as*] and the [*bain* N$_{def}$ *de*] constructions reflects the distinction that Irish makes quite consistently between inherent qualities and temporary states. This has been noted by Ailbhe Ó Corráin (2001), who speaks of non-contingent and contingent states.

Nouns used in the [*bain* N$_{def}$ *as*] constructions denote qualities, and those are generally expressed adjectivally in Irish and sometimes by constructions like [*bí* N *i*]:

tá sé go maith, tá maith ann 'he/it is good'

> *tá sé go holc* 'he/it is bad'
> *tá brí ann, tá brí leis, tá sé bríomhar* 'he/it is strong, vigorous'
> *tá sé goimhiúil* 'he/it is venomous'
> *tá sé leisciúil* 'he is lazy'
> *níl cotadh ar bith sna páistí sin* 'the children are not shy at all'
> *tá dochar ann, tá sé dochrach* 'it is harmful'
> *tá sé cealgach* 'he is guileful'
> *tá sé urchóideach* 'he is wicked/it is harmful'

Nouns used in the [*bain* N$_{def}$ *de*] construction denote states which can be expressed adjectivally but also by the same nouns used in the stative [*bí* N *ar*] and inceptive-causative [cuir N ar] constructions:

> *tá brón, fearg, imní, ocras, codladh, mórtas air* lit. 'there is grief, anger, worry, hunger, sleep, pride on him'
> *cuir brón, fearg, imní, ocras, codladh, mórtas air* lit. 'put grief, anger, worry, hunger, sleep, pride on him'
> *bain brón, fearg, imní, ocras, codladh, mórtas de* lit. 'remove grief, anger, worry, hunger, sleep, pride off him'

The conceptual differentiation between qualities and states is manifested in the different sets of linguistic means with which they are expressed. This evidence seems to reflect metaphorical spatial conceptualisations that can be formalised in terms of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) as:

> QUALITIES ARE INSIDE
> STATES ARE ON TOP

These conceptualisations predict that removing qualities means 'taking them out of someone' and removing states means 'taking them off someone'. The differentiation made in the choice of prepositions in the constructions in question, therefore, reflects the differences in spatial conceptualisations of qualities and states.

2.4 The definiteness/indefiniteness effect

Where does the definiteness/indefiniteness effect that is responsible for the differentiation of [*bain* N$_{indef}$ *as*] and [*bain* N$_{def}$ *as*] stem from? We may simply accept that in the case of [*bain* N$_{indef}$ *as*] indefiniteness marks the noun as discourse new and in [*bain* N$_{def}$ *as*] the definiteness marks the noun as discourse known. This explanation does work for cases with nouns denoting substantial entities like *bain airgead as an bpóca* 'take money out of the pocket' (first mention of money in the discourse) versus *bain an t-airgead as an bpóca* 'take the money out of the pocket' (the money has previously been

mentioned or is known to be in the pocket). However, it does not seem to work for the constructions with abstract nouns: *bain an mhaith as* does not presuppose that the good is known or has been mentioned.

If we consider the pragmatics of the phrases with *airgead* we notice that, in the case of *bain airgead as an bpóca* 'take money out of the pocket', the inference is that there is money to use, whereas, in the case of *bain an t-airgead as an bpóca* 'take the money out of the pocket', the inference is that there is no money in the pocket, that it is empty. The first inference may then be qualified as beneficial and the second one as removing. Consider the following examples from the corpus:

(19) *Ansin bhain neart cloch as na beanna agus thóg siad teach pobail os cionn na habhanna*
      'Then quarried a lot of stone from the cliffs and they built a church opposite the river'

(20) *agus bhain sé an corc as an bhuidéal*
      'he got the cork out of the bottle'

In the first example the stone is extracted to be used afterwards, whereas in the second example the cork is extracted out of the bottle because the absence of the cork will provide access to the content.

It seems, therefore, plausible to argue that the definiteness/indefiniteness effects that lie at the base of differentiation between [*bain* N$_{indef}$ *as*] and [*bain* N$_{def}$ *as*] constructions do not stem from the immediate meaning of the opposition article versus no article but are conceptualised pragmatic inferences of the use of this opposition on nouns in free combinations with *bain*.

The same pragmatic inference explanation holds for the [*bain* N$_{def}$ *de*] constructions with the only difference being that it is the inference coming from free combinations with *de* 'off' that their meaning is based on. Consider the following example:

(21) *bhain sí an glas den bhocsa agus thug sí léithi an bhábóg*
      'she took the lock off the box and took the doll with her'

The lock is being taken off the box because its absence provides access to the content.

The beneficial inference also provides an explanation for the restriction on the use of nouns other that those denoting beneficial characteristics in the [*bain* N$_{indef}$ *as*] construction: the idea of the usefulness of the extracted entity as a positive characteristic in free combinations with *bain* is conceptualised as an in-built feature of the [*bain* N$_{indef}$ *as*] construction, forming a constraint on the choice of nouns for it.

3. Conclusion

The constructions with *bain* discussed in this article can be considered schematic idioms with particular features that are not immediately derivable from the meanings of their constituents but that rather belong to the constructions themselves. These features are responsible for the choice of nouns to which the respective constructions are accessible and for the imposition of particular interpretations onto the words used in them. Four constructions can be distinguished: (a) beneficial [*bain* N_{indef} *as*] where N_{indef} is some characteristic beneficial to the subject who is the experiencer; (b) causative [*bain* N_{indef} *as*] where N_{indef} is a situation the subject causes the indirect object to perform; (c) quality-eliminating [*bain* N_{def} *as*]; and (d) state-eliminating [*bain* N_{def} *de*]. The analysis presented here can be applied to other constructions in Irish consisting of verbs, nouns and prepositions and, as these abound in the language and are typologically characteristic of it, the study of these phenomena is all the more important.

Lomonosov Moscow State University

References

Bloch-Trojnar, M., 2008, 'Verbs derived from agent nouns in Modern Irish', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 11, 1-22.

Bloch-Trojnar, M., 2009a, 'On the Nominal Status of VNs in Light Verb Constructions in Modern Irish', in: Kuźniak, M., Rozwadowska, B., eds., *PASE Papers 2008. Vol. 1: Studies in Language and Methodology of Teaching Foreign Languages*, Wrocław, 25-33.

Bloch-Trojnar, M., 2009b, 'Aspectual Characteristics of Light Verbs Constructions in Modern Irish', in: Bloch-Trojnar, M., ed., *Perspectives on Celtic Languages. Lublin Studies in Celtic Languages 6*, Lublin, 63-85.

Bloch-Trojnar, M., 2010, 'Semantic Constraints on Light Verb Constructions in Modern Irish', in: Stalmaszczyk, P., Fomin, M., eds., *Dimensions and Categories of Celticity: Studies in Language. Studia Celto-Slavica 4*, Łódź, 67-88.

Croft, W., **Cruse**, D. A., 2004, *Cognitive Linguistics*, Cambridge.

Fillmore, C. J., **Kay**, P., **O'Connor**, M. C., 1988, 'Regularity and Idiomaticity in Grammatical Constructions: The Case of Let Alone', *Language* 64 (3), 501-38.

Goldberg, A. E., 2006, *Constructions at Work. The Nature of Generalization in Language,* Oxford.

Greene, D., 1966, *The Irish Language*, Dublin.

Hoffman, T., **Trousdale**, G., eds., 2013, *The Oxford Handbook to Construction Grammar*, Oxford.

Lakoff, G., **Johnson**, M., 1980, *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago.

Nua-Chorpas na hÉireann, www.corpas.focloir.ie.

Ó Corráin, A., 2001, 'On Verbal Aspect in Irish with Particular Reference to the Progressive', in: Ó Catháin, B., Ó hUiginn, R., eds., *Béalra: Aistí ar Theangeolaíocht na Gaeilge*, Maigh Nuad, 159-73.

Ó Baoill, D., **Ó Domhnalláin**, T., 1975, *Réamhfhocail le Briathra na Gaeilge*, Baile Átha Cliath.

Wagner, H., 1959, *Das Verbum in den Sprachen der Britischen Inseln*, Tübingen.

Wigger, A., 2004, ''Es schlug ein Stolpern aus ihm, daß er verloren ging.' Kontrasive Studien zu irisch-deutschen Verbäquivalenzen', in: Wigger, A., ed., *Transceltica. Übersetzung keltischer Literatur in mitteleuropäische Sprachen*, Aachen, 69-82.

Wigger, A., 2008, 'Advances in the Lexicography of Modern Irish Verbs', in: Bloch-Rozmej, A., ed., *Issues in Celtic Linguistics*, Lublin, 233-50.

Wigger, A., 2009, '*Cuir*, *caith*, *leag* and Other Placement Verbs. Major and Minor Issues in the Lexicography of Modern Irish', in: Zimmer, S., ed., *Kelten am Rhein: Akten des dreizehnten Internationalen Keltologiekongresses. Zweiter Teil: Philologie. Sprachen und Literaturen*, Mainz am Rhein, 309-17.