

## Problems with Compounds in Welsh

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Focussing on Phrasal Compounds, and using as data the traditional folk names of plants.

### Phrasal Compounds Similar to Ordinary NPs

#### 1. The Same Structure, and Word Order

- |     |                                  |   |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|
| 1.1 | [Adj + N] <sub>NP</sub>          | hen ŵr<br><i>old man.SM</i><br>"southernwood"                           |
| 1.2 | [N + Adj] <sub>NP</sub>          | bysedd cochion<br><i>finger.pl red.pl</i><br>"foxgloves"                |
| 1.3 | [N + Poss N.indef] <sub>NP</sub> | botwm crys<br><i>(a) button (of a) shirt</i><br>"stitchwort"            |
| 1.4 | [N + Poss N.def] <sub>NP</sub>   | clychau'r gog<br><i>(the) bell.pl (of) the cuckoo.SM</i><br>"bluebells" |
| 1.5 | [N + Poss N.name] <sub>NP</sub>  | arian Llundain<br><i>(the) money (of) London</i><br>"honesty"           |

#### More Complex Forms

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 1.6 | [[N] <sub>NP</sub> + conj + [N] <sub>NP</sub> ] <sub>NP</sub> | Mair a Martha<br><i>Mary and Martha</i><br>"lungwort"   |
| 1.7 | [[N + conj + N] <sub>NP</sub> + Poss.def] <sub>NP</sub>       | sgidiau a sanau'r gwcw<br><i>(the) shoe.pl and sock.pl (of) the cuckoo.SM</i><br>"wild violets" |
| 1.8 | [N + [Poss N + Adj] <sub>NP</sub> ] <sub>NP</sub>             | gardis y gŵr drwg<br><i>(the) garter.pl (of) the man evil (=the devil)</i><br>"horsetail"       |
| 1.9 | [[N + Adj] <sub>NP</sub> + PP] <sub>NP</sub>                  | Moses bach yn y cawell<br><i>Moses little in the cradle</i><br>"monkshood"                      |

## 2. The Same Mutation Rules

|     |           |                           |  |
|-----|-----------|---------------------------|--|
| 2.1 | Soft Mut. | Adj + <u>N</u>            | hen <u>w</u> r<br><i>old man</i><br>"southernwood"   |
| 2.2 | Soft Mut. | Def Art + <u>Nsg.fem.</u> | clychau'r <u>g</u> og<br><i>(the) bell.pl (of) the cuckoo</i><br>"bluebells"                 |
| 2.3 | Soft Mut. | Nsg.fem. + <u>Adj</u>     | seren <u>f</u> elen<br><i>star yellow</i><br>"bog asphodel"                                  |
| 2.4 | Asp. Mut. | a (and) + <u>N</u>        | bara a <u>ch</u> aws y gog<br><i>(the) bread and cheese (of) the cuckoo</i><br>"wood sorrel" |

## 3. The Same Morphological Inflections

|     |          |   |               |
|-----|----------|---|---------------|
| 3.1 | Plural   | bysedd <u>co</u> chion<br><i>finger.pl red.pl</i><br>"foxgloves"  | [bys, coch]   |
| 3.2 | Plural   | clychau'r <u>g</u> og<br><i>(the) bells.pl (of) the cuckoo.SM</i><br>"bluebells"                        | [cloch]       |
| 3.3 | Plural   | <u>tra</u> ed <u>br</u> ain<br><i>foot.pl (of) crow.pl</i><br>"bluebells"                               | [troed, brân] |
| 3.4 | Fem. Sg. | seren <u>f</u> elen<br><i>star yellow.f.sg.SM</i><br>"bog asphodel"                                     | [melyn]       |
| 3.5 | Fem. Sg. | lili <u>w</u> en fach<br><i>lily white.f.sg.SM little.SM</i><br>"snowdrop"                              | [gwyn]        |
| 3.6 | Fem. Sg. | siaced <u>f</u> raith Joseff<br><i>(the) jacket multicoloured.f.sg.SM (of) Joseph</i><br>"ribbon grass" | [brith]       |

## But Phrasal Compounds Differ from Ordinary NPs in Several Ways

### 4. Meaning

|     |                      |          |   |                                 |
|-----|----------------------|----------|---|---------------------------------|
| 4.1 | hen wŕ               | NP       | = | "an old man"                    |
|     |                      | Compound | = | "southernwood"                  |
| 4.2 | seren felen          | NP       | = | "a yellow star"                 |
|     |                      | Compound | = | "bog asphodel"                  |
| 4.3 | siaced fraith Joseff | NP       | = | "Joseph's coat of many colours" |
|     |                      | Compound | = | "ribbon grass"                  |

### 5. Compounds are Rigidly Singular or Plural

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 5.1 | hen wŕ<br><i>old man</i><br>"southernwood"                      | *hen wŕ<br><i>old man.pl</i><br>"southernwoods"   |
| 5.2 | dant y llew<br><i>(the) tooth (of) the lion</i><br>"dandelion"  | *dannedd y llew / llewod<br><i>(the) tooth.pl (of) the lion / lion.pl</i><br>"dandelions" |
| 5.3 | *gwydd fach<br><i>(a) goose little.SM</i><br>"willow catkin"    | gwyddau bach<br><i>goose.pl. little</i><br>"willow catkins"                               |
| 5.4 | *cloch y gog<br><i>(the) bell (of) the cuckoo</i><br>"bluebell" | clychau'r gog<br><i>(the) bell.pl (of) the cuckoo</i><br>"bluebells"                      |

very rare: - fel cacynen mewn bys coch "like a wasp in a foxglove bloom"

### Ordinary NPs may be Singular or Plural as the Situation Requires

|     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 5.5 | hen ddy<br><i>old man.SM</i><br>"an old man"                       | hen ddy<br><i>old man.pl.SM</i><br>"old men"  |
| 5.6 | coes y bachgen<br><i>(the) leg (of) the boy</i><br>"the boy's leg" | coesau'r bachgen / bechgyn<br><i>(the) leg.pl (of) the boy / boy.pl</i><br>"the boy's / boys' legs" |

## Ad Hoc Solution

- 5.7    *blodyn dant y llew*                      *blodau dant y llew*  
         *flower (the) tooth (of) the lion*       *flower.pl (the) tooth (of) the lion*  
         "a dandelion flower"                      "dandelion flowers"
- 5.8    *blodyn clychau'r gog*                      *blodau clychau'r gog*  
         *flower (the) bell.pl (of) the cuckoo*   *flower.pl (the) bell.pl (of) the cuckoo*  
         "a bluebell flower"                      "bluebell flowers"

## 6. Adjectives may qualify the Compound as a whole, but not individual nouns.

- 6.1    y dant y llew arall  
         *[the tooth (of) the lion] other*  
         "the other dandelion"
- 6.2    \*dant arall y llew  
         *[tooth other] (of) the lion*
- 6.3    \*dant y llew arall  
         *tooth [(of) the lion other]*

**Ordinary NPs allow additional adjectives to qualify elements within the NP but not the whole phrase.**

- 6.4    \*brawd y bachgen arall  
         *[(the) brother (of) the boy] other*  
         "the other boy's brother"
- 6.5    brawd arall y bachgen  
         *[(the) brother other] (of) the boy*  
         "the boy's other brother"
- 6.6    brawd y bachgen arall  
         *(the) brother [(of) the boy other]*  
         "the other boy's brother"

**Demonstratives may qualify the Compound as a whole, but not an individual noun.**

- 6.7    y dant y llew hwn  
         *[the tooth (of) the lion] this*  
         "this dandelion"
- 6.8    \* y dant y llew hwn  
         *the tooth (of) [the lion this]*  
         "this dandelion"

**Ordinary NPs allow Demonstratives to qualify qualifying a noun within the NP, but not the whole phrase.**

6.9 \*brawd y bachgen hwn  
*[(the) brother (of) the boy] this*  
"this boy's brother"

6.10 brawd y bachgen hwn  
*(the) brother [(of) the boy this]*  
"this boy's brother"

## 7. The Use of an Initial Definite Article

**Indefinite Compounds appear in the usual Indefinite Contexts**

7.1 Mae Ifan wedi rhoi ei ffydd mewn bysedd cochion ar gyfer y sioe.  
*is Ifan perf. put his faith in finger.pl red.pl for the show*  
"Ifan has put his faith in foxgloves for the show."

7.2 Mae'r rhain yn fysedd cochion.  
*is these comp. finger.pl.SM red.pl*  
"These are foxgloves."

7.3 Mae 'na fysedd cochion yn tyfu yno eleni.  
*is there finger.pl.SM red.pl contin. grow there this-year*  
"There are foxgloves growing there this year."

**Definite Compounds Appear in the usual Definite Contexts**

7.4 Mae Ifan wedi rhoi ei ffydd yn y bysedd cochion ar gyfer y sioe.  
*is Ifan perf. put his faith in the finger.pl red.pl for the show*  
"Ifan has put his faith in foxgloves for the show."

7.5 \*Mae'r rhain yn y bysedd cochion.  
*is these comp. the finger.pl.SM red.pl*  
"These are the foxgloves."

7.6 Rhain yw'r bysedd cochion.  
*these is the finger.pl red.pl*  
"These are the foxgloves."

**Forms containing a Definite Possessive:-**

**Ordinary NPs with a Definite Possessive cannot have an Initial Def. Art**

7.7 ysgol y pentref / \*yr ysgol y pentref  
*(the) school (of) the village / the school (of) the village*  
"the village school"

- 7.8 Mae (\*r) ysgol y pentref wedi cau.  
*is (the) school (of) the village perf. shut*  
"The village school has shut."

**and appear only in Definite Contexts**

- 7.9 Mae Ifan yn ysgol y pentref.  
*is Ifan in (the) school (of) the village*  
"Ifan is in the village school."
- 7.10 \*Mae hon yn ysgol y pentref.  
*is this.f comp. (the) school (of) the village*  
"This is the village school."
- 7.11 Hon yw ysgol y pentref.  
*this is (the) school (of) the village*  
"This is the village school."

**Compounds with a Definite Possessive appear freely with or without an initial Def. Art.**

- 7.12 clychau'r gog / y clychau'r gog  
*(the) bell.pl (of) the cuckoo / the bell.pl (of) the cuckoo*  
"bluebells / the bluebells"
- 7.13 Mae'r clychau'r gog wedi gwywo.  
*is the bell.pl (of) the cuckoo perf. fade*  
"The bluebells have faded."

**Without an initial Def. Art they behave as Indefinites**

- 7.14 Mae Ifan wedi buddsoddi mewn clychau'r gog eleni.  
*is Ifan perf. invest in (the) bell.pl (of) the cuckoo this-year*  
"Ifan has invested in bluebells this year."
- 7.15 Mae'r rhain yn glychau'r gog.  
*is these comp. (the) bell.pl (of) the cuckoo*  
"These are bluebells."
- 7.16 Mae 'na glychau'r gog yn tyfu yno.  
*is there (the) bell.pl (of) the cuckoo contin. grow there*  
"There are bluebells growing there."

**With an initial Def. Art they behave as Definites**

- 7.17 Mae Ifan wedi rhoi ei ffydd yn y clychau'r gog eleni.  
*is Ifan perf. put his faith in the bell.pl (of) the cuckoo this-year*  
"Ifan has put his faith in the bluebells this year."
- 7.18 \*Mae'r rhain yn y clychau'r gog.  
*is these comp. the bell.pl (of) the cuckoo*  
"These are the bluebells."

7.19 Rhain yw'r clychau'r gog.  
*these is the the bell.pl (of) the cuckoo*  
"These are the bluebells."

## 8. Partial Number Agreement only in a Sentence:-

### Singular Compounds Appear in Singular Contexts

8.1 Lili wen fach yw hon.  
*lily white.f.sg.SM little.SM is this.f.sg*  
"This is a snowdrop."

8.2 Sawl lili wen fach sydd yn tyfu yno?  
*how-many lily white.f.sg.SM little.SM is contin grow there?*  
"How many snowdrop sare growing there?"

8.3 Mae pob lili wen fach yn yr ardd wedi gwywo.  
*is every lily white.f.sg.SM little.SM in the garden.SM perf fade*  
"Every snowdrop in the garden has faded."

### Plural Compounds Appear in Plural Contexts

8.4 Gwyddau bach yw'r rhain.  
*goose.pl little are these*  
"These are willow catkins."

8.5 Oes llawer o wyddau bach yno eleni?  
*is lot of goose.pl little there this-year?*  
"Are there a lot of willow catkins there this year?"

8.6 Mae'r gwyddau bach i gyd wedi gwywo.  
*is the goose.pl little all perf. fade*  
"The willow catkins have all faded."

### But Singular Compounds can also appear in Plural Contexts

8.7 Lili wen fach yw'r rhain.  
*lily white little are these*  
"These are snowdrops."

8.8 Oes llawer o lili wen fach yno eleni?  
*is lot of lily white little there this-year?*  
"Are there a lot of snowdrops there this year?"

8.9 Mae'r lili wen fach i gyd wedi gwywo.  
*is the lily white little all perf. fade*  
"The snowdrops have all faded."

## While Plural Compounds cannot appear in Singular Contexts

- 8.10 \* Gwyddau bach yw hwn.  
*goose.pl is this*  
"This is willow catkins."
- 8.11 \* Sawl gwyddau bach sydd yn tyfu yno?  
*how-many goose.pl little is contin grow there?*  
"How many willow catkins are growing there?"
- 8.12 \* Mae pob gwyddau bach yr ardd wedi gwywo.  
*is every goose.pl little in the garden.SM perf fade*  
"Every willow catkins in the garden has faded."

## 9. Lack of Gender Agreement in the Sentence:-

Usually a Sg Head Noun determines gender agreement in the Sentence, as expected.

- 9.1 Hen ŵr yw hwn. [gŵr = m.sg]  
*old man.SM is this.m.sg*  
"This is southernwood."
- 9.2 Mae'r hen ŵr yn ei flodau.  
*is the old man.SM in his flower.pl.SM*  
"The southernwood is in bloom."
- 9.3 Y goes goch yw hon. [coes = f.sg]  
*the leg.SM red.SM is this.f.sg*  
"This is a herb Robert."
- 9.4 Mae'r goes goch yn ei blodau.  
*is the leg.SM red.SM in her flower.pl*  
"The herb Robert is in bloom."

But not if the Compound contains a Definite Possessive:-

Always Masculine gender agreement, regardless of the gender of the Head Noun

- 9.5 Cythrel y gerddi yw hwn. [cythrel = m.sg]  
*(the) devil (of) the garden.pl is this.m.sg*  
"This is ground elder."
- 9.6 Mae'r cythrel y gerddi yn ei flodau.  
*is the devil (of) the garden.pl in his flower.pl.SM*  
"The ground elder is in bloom."
- 9.7 Dant y llew yw hwn. [dant = f.sg]  
*(the) tooth (of) the lion is this.m.sg*  
"This is a dandelion."

- 9.8 Mae'r dant y llew yn ei flodau.  
*is the tooth (of) the lion in his flower.pl.SM*  
 "The dandelion is in bloom."

**In the corresponding Ordinary NPs the gender of the Singular Head Noun determines gender agreement.**

- 9.9 Cyfrifoldeb y dosbarth yw hwn. [cyfrifoldeb = m.sg]  
*(the) responsibility (of) the class is this.m.sg*  
 "This is the class's responsibility."
- 9.10 Mae brawd y ferch yn cysgu. Mae e wedi blino. [brawd = m.sg]  
*is (the) brother (of) the girl contin. sleep. is he perf. tire*  
 "The boy's brother is sleeping. He is tired."
- 9.11 Ysgol y pentref yw hon. [ysgol = f.sg]  
*(the) school (of) the village is this.f.sg*  
 "This is the village school."
- 9.12 Mae dant y bachgen yn brifo. Mae hi wedi ysigo. [dant= f.sg]  
*is (the) tooth (of) the boy contin. hurt. is she perf shake*  
 "The boy's tooth is hurting. It has shaken."

## 10. Oddities

**Structures which are not found in NPs in the normal way, but do appear as Compounds.**

- 10.1 [N.name + PP]<sub>NP</sub> Siôn heb siafo  
*John without shaving*  
 "cactus"
- 10.2 [Adj + Poss N.def]<sub>NP</sub> melyn y twyni ??  
*(the) yellow (of) the dune.pl*  
 "tormentil"
- 10.3 [Adj + PP]<sub>NP</sub> cas gan gythraul  
*disliked by devil*  
 "scabious"
- 10.4 [PP]<sub>NP</sub> ar lin mam  
*on (the) lap (of) mother*  
 "tolmeia"
- 10.5 [S]<sub>NP</sub> n'ad fi'n angof  
*not leave me comp. forgotten*  
 "forget me not"

## 11. Conclusions

Compounds differ from Ordinary NPs in a number of ways:-

a) Specialised Meaning

b) Rigid Form

Rigidly singular or plural

No additional internal adjectives or demonstratives

c) Opaque to the Action of Grammatical Rules

Initial definite article OK regardless of internal structure of compound

Presence of a definite possessive does not ensure the compound is definite

Partial number agreement only

Partial gender agreement only

d) Allow a wider selection of structures than is normal in NPs

## 12. References

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