

ON OLD CELTIC — OLD ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONTACTS AND THEIR CODE-SWITCHING LINGUISTIC INTERFERENCE

by
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The voluminous scientific oeuvre of Professor Endre Arató gives plenty of evidence how fruitful research in problems of history, and in any other field of humanities, can be if the author makes use of the ideas of isomorphism whose seeds lay dormant in the works by the famous M. Ampère and which helped the eminent N. Wiener to rectify the errors of the ever narrower specialization in all branches of science, to widen their horizons, and to create the theory of cybernetics.

The theory of isomorphism suggests the necessity of linguistic research which would include in the study of language, this greatest miracle of homo sapiens, the analysis of both intralinguistic and extralinguistic¹ factors acting as actuation riddles within "inherent variability" of spontaneous development, "non-code-switching" linguistic interference, deduction and induction, universals and flux, intuitions and statistical evidence, innate private intentions and social meaning, essence and accidents, competence and performance, abstract hypothesis and low-level analysis, phenomena of language centre and periphery. To do it satisfactorily is far from being an easy task. The recognition of how great the role of isomorphism is resulted in a quest for common features of languages, an inference with regard to discernable universals, a research into linguistic change (language development, evolution)² regularities, a study of language contacts and their linguistic interference.

Linguistic problems of language contacts (formerly "mixture of languages"; "interacting of languages") were for a long time in the focus of the scholars' attention. But only recently having overcome the delusions of the stereotyped neogrammarians, the pitfalls of the hard line descriptivists, the shortcomings of so orthodox a creed as the transformational prescriptivists, and the misunderstandings of the variationists, who bask in the sunlight of their new-found respectability, scholars have managed to lay down the foundations of a new branch of linguistic science — the theory of language contacts and their linguistic interference.

Remarkable is the success this new branch of modern linguistic has achieved.

But together with success much controversy has come to the surface recently, even in the question what linguistic phenomena the term "language contacts" should include, what their types and subtypes are, what dynamic curves the linguistic interference of the "mechanism"³ of contacts of any of these types and subtypes creates, what degree of penetrability different linguistic levels of the receptor-language possess, etc.

Our investigations have shown that the term "language contacts" should include all types of internal and external language interrelations, starting with causal non-marginal contacts (including artificial subordinative bilingualism) and ending with permanent marginal and interregional ones (which include natural coordinative bilingualism).

However, as the results of the "field work" devoted to the study of concrete phenomena of language contacts are scanty, there cannot as yet exist a universal theory of linguistic interference. Nevertheless a detailed analysis of a large corpus of concrete linguistic material on the results of linguistic interference of different language contacts entitles us to suggest a linguistic universal which would run something like this: Those types and subtypes of language contacts the linguistic interference of which is rooted in natural (group) coordinative bilingualism of permanent internal intra-regional language contacts of genealogically related an structural-typologically resembling languages or dialects promote the most dynamic curve of linguistic interference, which has the following succession of language level penetrability:

- a) lexics (lexico-semantics)
- b) syntax
- c) word-formation⁴
- d) phonetics (phonology)
- e) morphology

What were the types and subtypes of language contacts the interaction between Old Celtic and Old English had brought down?

It is the evidence of extralinguistic factors, and primarily those of history, archaeology, geography, which serve as a starting point in singling out different types and subtypes of Old Celtic—Old English language contacts.

Extralinguistic factors, and historical in particular, witness that within a period of little more than a century after the first body of West (or Central) Germanic tribes led by Hengist and Horsa had landed in A. D. 449 at Thanet, in Kent, the Jutes, Saxons, Angles were firmly established in Britain everywhere south of the present Scottish border within the exception of the north-west, Wales and the Devon peninsula, while north of that border they had occupied Lothian.

The relations between these Germanic tribes and the native Celtic inhabitants took many forms. In some areas, as in the territory south of the Thames occupied by the Saxons, the newcomers were met with stubborn resistance and succeeded in establishing themselves only after sanguinary battles. Many of the Celts were driven into the Highlands and sought

refuge in Wales and Cornwall. In other places where the inhabitants were few the Germanic tribes probably settled down alongside the Celts creating different types of more or less peaceful relations.

All these relations promoted different types of Old English—Old Celtic language contacts and their linguistic interference. The main ones were those which were based on interregional language interactions as a result of the effects of a Celtic substratum, and marginal language interrelations which produced linguistic phenomena typical for adstrat interactions.

The vestiges of the linguistic interference of these types and subtypes of Old Celtic—Old English language contacts are to be found mainly on the lexical level (lexico-semantics) of the interacting languages.

The Celtic Substratum in Old English

The effects of the Celtic substratum⁵ in OE resulting from intraregional language contacts were in fact its resumed effects of the linguistic interference of the Proto-Germanic—Proto-Celtic, and North—West Germanic—Old Celtic, respectively West (or Central) Germanic—Old Celtic language interrelations which took place in the 1st—4th c. on the Continent. The heritage of the linguistic interference of the Celtic substratum of these language contacts survived partly in the language of the Jutes, Saxons and Angles who conquered Britain and, thus these survivals prepared the way for the take-over of new Celticisms by OE.

Among these few lexical units which OE preserved from the heritage of the results of the linguistic interference of the more ancient language contacts we may mention words belonging to the following lexico-semantic microsystems:

a) The lexico-semantic microsystems of terms of state-hood, social and spiritual life:

OE *rīce* 'kinship, kingdom, rule, power, realm' < PGerm. **rikja* < PCelt. **rīgion*⁶, 'id.:'; cf. Lat.-Gallic *-rīx* (Gen. Sing. *-rīgīs*, in proper names, e. g., *Vercingetorix*), OSax. *rīki*, OHG *rīhhi*, OScand. *rīki*, Goth. *reiki*, OFris. *rike*, MoHG *Reich*: 'id.:';

OE *embeht* ~ *ambiht* 'service, message, office' < PGerm. **anbahts* < PCelt. **ambact* 'servant'; cf. Lat.-Gallic *ambactus* (in Caesar's *Notitias de bello Gallico*), OSax. *ambahteo*, OHG *ambaht*: 'id.:'; OIcel. *ambatt* 'maid-servant', MoHG *Amt* 'office, post';

OE *ād* 'oath' < PGerm. **aithoz* < OCelt. *oitho*: 'id.:'; cf. OIcel. *eiðr*, OHG *eid*, Goth. *aiths*, MoHG *Eid*: 'id.:'; *wēalh* ~ *wēal* < NWGerm. *wealth* 'foreigner, stranger, slave, Briton, Welshman' < OCelt. *welahas* 'Celtic tribe "Volcae"'; cf. OHG *val(a)ha*, 'foreigner, stranger', OScand. *valir* (Pl.) 'Celts, French', MoHG *walsch* 'Italian', etc.

(b) The lexico-semantic microsystem of terms denoting concepts of material culture:

OE *iren* ~ *isern* ~ *isaern* ~ *isen* 'iron, sword' < PGerm. **isarnam* < PCelt. **sarno* ~ *eisarno* 'id.:'; cf. OHG *isarn*, OScand. *isarn*, Du. *ijzer*, Goth.

eisarn, MoHG *Eisen*, W. *hairan*, Corn. *hoern*, Irish. *iarann*, Bret. *houarn*, OIcel. *isarn*, OSax. *isarn*;

OE *tūn* 'farmyard fence, enclosure, homestead, town' < PGerm. **tūn* < PCelt. **dūn* 'fence, fort'; cf. OCelt., Lat. -Gallic *-dunum* (in place names like *Ver-dunum*) 'fortress, city', OFris. *tun*, OHG *zun*, OScand. *tun*, MoHG *Zaun* 'hedge, fence', OIr. *dun* 'fortress', etc.

New Celticisms taken over by OE from the substratum of Ancient British, Old Welsh, Old Cornish, Old Scots Gaelic, Old Manx as the result of the linguistic interference of their marginal and intraregional language contacts which took place during the 5th–8th c. in several areas of Britain consisted mainly of lexical units belonging to different lexico-semantic microsystems:

(a) The lexico-semantic microsystem of names of rivers which go back to Old Celtic appellatives:

Avon 'the name of the river the Avon' < OCelt. *avon* ~ *abon* 'river'; cf. Gaelic *amhuin* 'id.', W. *afon* 'do';

Ouse, *Exe*, *Usk*, *Esk*, *Ux* 'names of rivers' < OCelt. *uisge* 'water'; cf. Gaelic *uisge* 'id.'; MoE *whisky* ~ *whiskey* 'spirit distilled from malted barley, other grains, or potatoes' < Gaelic. *uisge beatha* 'water of life, whisky' (the latter element being dropped);

Thames 'the name of the river the Thames' < OCelt. *tamisa* 'deep river'; cf. W. *tafwys* 'id.';

Severn 'the name of the river the Severn' < OCelt. *sabrina* 'swift river', etc.

(b) The lexico-semantic microsystem of inversion compound river names, the initial components of which go back to Old Celtic appellatives:

Doverdale the initial component from OCelt. *durbr* 'waters'; cf. W. *dufr* 'id.';

Exmoor the initial component *Ex-* from OCelt. *uisge* 'water';

Frome St. Quintine the initial component *Frome* from OCelt. *frome* 'water', etc.

(c) The lexico-semantic microsystem of inversion compound place names, the initial components of which go back to Old Celtic appellatives:

Inchcape, *Inchcolm*, *Inchulva* — the initial component *inch* — from OCelt. *inch* 'island';

Llandoverym *Llandigat*, *Llandudno*, *Llanduf* — the initial components of which go back to OCelt. *llan* 'church'; cf. Vallon *llan* 'id.';

Dumbarton, *Dumfries*, *Dunedin*, *Dunstable*, etc. — the first components: *Dum-* from OCelt. *dun* ~ *dum* 'hill, stronghold';

Torr-cross, *Torrhill*, etc. — the first component: *Torr-* from OCelt. *torr* 'rocket';

Penketh, *Penevyd*, *Penhill*, *Penrith*, *Pen-y-gent*, *Ben Lomond*, *Ben Lecis*, *Ben M'dhui*, etc. — the initial components originate from OCelt. *pen-* 'summit, top, hill'; cf. Corn. *pen*, Walloon *pen*: 'id.';

Kilbrook, *Kilimore*, etc. — the initial components: *Kil-* go back to OCelt. *coil* 'forest';

Kilbride, Kilmacolm, etc. — the initial components: *Kil-* from OCelt. *kil* 'church';

Trefriw, Treffynnon, Tranent, etc. — the initial components: *Tre-* ~ *Tra-* from OCelt. *tre* 'village, settlement, farmstead'; cf. Cor. *tre* ~ *trew*, Walloon *tref* ~ *tre*: 'id.';

Aberdeen, Aberfeld, Abergeldie, etc. — the initial components *Aber-* of which go back to OCelt. *aber* 'the mouth of a river', etc.

(d) The lexico-semantic microsystems of place names the second components of which originate from OCelt appellatives:

Ilfracombe, Babbacombe, etc. — the second components *-combe* from OCelt. *combe* 'valley';

Billingshurst — the second component *-hurst* from OCelt. *hurst* 'grove', etc.

(e) The lexico-semantic microsystem of place names the components of which go back to OCelt. ancient Celtic ethnonyms:

Walton, Walcott, Walworth, Walden, Walpote, Walbrook, etc. — the initial toponymic elements of which: *Wal-* go back to OCelt. *wealhas* 'Celt, Welsh';

Cumberland — the initial toponymic component *Cumber-* of which originates from OCelt. *Cymru* 'ancient tribal name';

Cornwall the second toponymic element of which originates from OCelt. *wealhas* 'Celt, Welsh', i. e. 'Conubian Celts, Welsh';

Devon — originates from the OCelt. ethnonym *Dumnoi*, etc.

(f) Proper names originating from Old Celtic appellatives:

Arthur < OCelt. *arthur* 'high, noble'

Donald < OCelt. *donald* 'proud, chief'

Evan < OCelt. *evan* 'young warrior'

Kennedy < OCelt. *kennedy* 'ugly head', etc.

(g) The lexico-semantic microsystem of place names the components of which go back to appellatives of the Celtic substratum as to their historical source of borrowing and in turn to Latin as to their genetic source of taking over:

Lancaster, Gloucester, Leicester, Chester, Worcester, Manchester, etc. the second components of these toponyms: *-caster* ~ *chester* go back to OCelt. *ceaster* 'Roman military settlement' and in turn originates from Lat. appellative *castrum* 'military camp';

Warwick, Norwich, Greenwich, Woolwich, etc. the second components of these typonyms: *-wick -wich* go back to OCelt. *-vic* 'village', and in turn originate from the Latin appellative *vicus* 'village, small settlement';

(h) The lexico-semantic microsystem of monosemes denoting different constructions.

These lexical units had Old Celtic substratum as their historical source of borrowing and in turn Latin as the genetic source of their taking over⁸:

OE *stræt* ~ *strēt* 'paved road' < OCelt. *strēt* < Lat. *strata* (*via*) 'id.' (Lat. *strata* (F) Part II. of *sternere* 'to strew, pave');

OE *weall* ~ *wall* 'rampart, row of stakes, brick or stone wall' < OCelt. *wall* < Lat. *uallum*: 'id.';

OE *castel* 'fort, castle, fortified camp' < OCelt. *castel* < Lat. *castellum* (diminutive of *castrum* 'military camp'), etc.

(i) The lexico-semantic microsystem of terms denoting religious and spiritual concepts:

OE *cross* 'cross' < OCelt. *cross* < Lat. *cruc-em* (Acc. of *crux*): 'id.'

OE *dry* 'magician, sorcerer' < OCelt. *druí* 'druid', etc.

The Celtic Adstrat in Old English

The marginal Old English - Old Celtic language interrelations the linguistic interference of which produced linguistic phenomena typical of adstrat⁹ interactions, took place in several areas of Britain in the 8th - 11th c. However, only a few Celticisms brought to life by the linguistic interference of these language contacts reached in their linguistic attraction the OE koiné, based on West Saxon, and survived there.

They consisted of Nouns, Adjectives, and Verbs making up different lexico-semantic microsystems:

(1) Nouns

(a) The lexico-semantic microsystem of monosemes denoting animals:

OE *assa* 'ass' < OCelt. *assan* < Lat. *asinus*: 'id.'; Arab. *atan*, Hebr. *athon*: 'id.'; cf. Ir. *assan* W. *asyn*: 'id.';

OE *brock* 'badger' < OCelt. *broch* 'id.'; cf. Gael. *brocach*, Manx *broc*: 'id.', etc.

(b) The lexico-semantic microsystems of monosemes denoting clothes, terms of every-day life:

OE *bratt* 'cloak, rag' < OCelt. *brat* 'id.'; cf. W. *brethyn* 'woolen cloth', Ir. *brat*, Gael. *brat*: 'cloak, rag';

OE *binn* 'manger, basket' < OCelt. *benna* 'id.' (the genetic source of borrowing was the Lat. *bena*, cf. Lat. -Gallie *bena* 'basket');

OE *crocca* 'crock, pitcher' < OCelt. *crogan* 'id.'; cf. Gael. *crog*, Ir. *crogan*, W. *crochan*: 'pitcher, pot', etc.

(c) The lexico-semantic microsystems of monosemes denoting phenomena of social life:

OE *ancor* 'hermit' < OCelt. *ancura* 'id.'; cf. OIr. *ancura* 'id.', etc.

(d) The lexico-semantic microsystem of terms denoting concepts of construction, phenomena of nature:

OE *dūn* 'fortified hill, dune' < OCelt. *dun* 'id.'; cf. Gael. *dun*, W. *din* 'id.';

OE *combe* ~ *cumbe* 'a hollow in a hill side; narrow valley' < OCelt. *cumbā* ~ *cumbos* 'id.'; cf. W. *cwm*, Cor. *cuma* 'a hollow, dale', Ir. *cumar valley*', etc.

(2) Adjectives

(a) The lexico-semantic microsystem of monosemes denoting colours: OE *dun(n)* 'dark' < OCelt. *donnos* 'dun, dusky, dark'; cf. W. *dwn.* 'dun dusky', Ir. *donn* 'brown', Gael. *donn* 'brown', etc.

(3) Verbs

The lexico-semantic microsystem of monosemes denoting different actions:

OE *cursian* 'to curse' < OCelt. *cūrsaig-* 'to profane oath, reprehend'; cf. OIr. *cūrsaigim* 'I reprehend', etc.

All these Celticisms on the lexical level (lexico-semantics) which were borrowed by Old English due to the linguistic interference of different types of language contacts (substratal and adstratal) received in the receptor-language different degrees of linguistic assimilation ($Q < 0,01 - 0,04$).

In general, they received in English their right of citizenship.

NOTES

¹ On the hierarchy of the the intralinguistic and extralinguistic actuation riddles see: *Rot, S.*: The Development of Present-Day English and Its Sociolinguistic Problems. "Hungarian Studies in English", XIII, Debrecen 1980, pp. 7–32.

² On the difference between "linguistic change", "language development" and "evolution of language" see: *Rot, S.*: Inherent Variability and Linguistic Interference in Present-Day British Standard English, "Grazer Linguistische Studien" 11/12 "Festgabe für Norman Denison", Graz, Frühjahr 1980, pp. 221–237.

³ See: *Розенцвейг, В. Ю.*: „Влияние" или „механизм" контактов? „Проблемы языкознания", Москва, 1967, pp. 18–29.

⁴ See: *Rot, S.*: Multilateral Contacts of Languages and Dialects in the Carpathian Area and Problems of Sociolinguistics, "Referate von 1. soziolinguistischen Grazer Symposium", Grazer Linguistische Studien, Frühjahr 1979, pp. 133–151.

⁵ It is G. I. Ascoli who is considered to be the founder of the theory of substratum in linguistics. See: *Ascoli, G. I.*: Sprachwissenschaftliche Briefe, Leipzig, 1887. However, he had many forerunners and as *Lewy, E.* in his work *Heimatfrage* pointed out in 1931: "I am unable to put down the whole history of this theory (substratum – S. R.). See: *Lewy, E.*: Kleine Schriften, Berlin, 1961, p. 203. During the recent decades the theory of substratum, has received its further development in the works by V. I. Abaev, P. Ariste, S. B. Bernštejn, B. Kálmán, J. Hubschmidt, V. N. Jareeva, V. Polák, B. A. Serebrennikov, W. Veenker, and others. In spite of the fact that this new literature has brought to the surface new controversies the theory of substratum and its methodological approaches are rather useful tools in the study of language contacts and their linguistic interference.

⁶ The etymology of these Celticisms in PGerm., NWGerm., WGerm., and OE has only a medial relative etymological reliability.

⁷ This toponymic root monomorph *Pen-*, has an homonymic counterpart *Pen-*, which originates probably from OE *penn* 'pen; small enclosure for sheep, cows, poultry'; e. g., *Hampen*, *Oulpen*. The latter does not occur in inversion compounds and thus can be differentiated from the toponymic component *Pen-* which occupies an initial position, and is of Celtic origin.

⁸ On the difference between the "genetic", "primary historical", and "historical" sources of lexical borrowing see: *Pom, A.*: Венгерско-восточнославянские языковые контакты, Будапешт, 1973, pp. 103–158.

⁹ The term "adstrat" was coined by M. Walkoff in 1932. See: J. Knobloch, *Sprachwissenschaftliches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg, 1961, p. 45.

Abbreviations

Arab.	=	Arabic
Bret.	=	Bretonic
Celt.	=	Celtic
Corn.	=	Cornish
Du.	=	Dutch
Gael.	=	Gaelic
Goth.	=	Gothic
Hebr.	=	Hebrew
Ir.	=	Irish
Lat.	=	Latin
MoHG	=	Modern High German
NWGerm.	=	North West Germanic
OCelt.	=	Old Celtic
OE	=	Old English
OIceI.	=	Old Icelandic
OIr.	=	Old Irish
OFris.	=	Old Frisian
OHG	=	Old High German
OSax.	=	Old Saxon
OScand.	=	Old Scandinavian (Old Norse)
PCelt.	=	Proto-Celtic
PGerm.	=	Proto-Germanic
W.	=	Welsh