

Epistolary Grammar: Syntactical Highlights in Kate Roberts's Correspondence with Saunders Lewis

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Abstract

The Modern Welsh epistolary texteme is here introduced and briefly examined, on the basis of the correspondence of Kate Roberts and Saunders Lewis. Following some preliminary general comments on the texteme, six syntactical topics are discussed – the nynegocentric deixis and tensing; presentation; focalization, topicalization and related issues; the epistolary narrative; allocutive and reactive elements; parenthesis – with a view to demonstrating the special grammatical systems of this texteme which, despite its affinities with the dialogue, is idiosyncratic in perspective and juncture.

Byddaf yn hoffi medru dehongli cystrawen yn fathemategol hollol.
'I will like being able to interpret syntax mathematically completely.'
(KR to SL, 2/2/33, No.75, p.99)

Ni fyddaf i byth yn gwybod beth i'w wneud wrth ysgrifennu sgwrs mewn stori, ac yn methu gwneud rheol i mi fy hun. Ond 'ddown ni byth i ben os ceisiwn ni wneud sgwrsio yn hollol yr un fath ag y sieryd pobl.
'I will never know what to do when writing conversation in a story, and failing to make up a rule for myself. But we shall never come to an end if we try to make conversation exactly the same as people speak.'
(KR to SL, 22/4/68, No.202 p.224f.)

... ac mae'ch Cymraeg yn gyfoeth gogoneddus.
'... and your Welsh is a glorious treasure.'
(SL to KR, 13/1/57, No.169, p.183)

1. Preliminary

A much neglected, almost ignored texteme of Welsh (*texteme* being roughly the [text-] grammatical correspondent of the literary *genre*, a textual type with its own distinctive consistent grammatical system), the epistolary text (ET) carries numerous implications for Welsh and general syntax and especially macro-syntax. In this paper, part of an ongoing comprehensive study of the syntactical usage in Kate Roberts's writing, I will discuss some highlights of a special study of grammatical features in Kate Roberts's correspondence, spanning sixty years, with Saunders Lewis (as edited by Dafydd Ifans in 1993). My aim in this paper, beside registering a proposal for charting a rich special section of Kate Roberts's grammatical usage, extends to general syntactic theory, namely to strengthen or even prove the case for the ET as distinct in macrosyntactic and textemic terms. I have several general and special points I wish to make, with the general methodological point the advocacy of fine resolution or microscopy in linguistic description, following the careful and rigorous preliminary separation of different textemes. (In passing, let me add that the ET has been studied for its grammatical interest in some languages – Greek, Latin, Old Babylonian and Akkadian in general, Coptic, some West European languages, usually with a special focus on *Tempuslehre*).

The issue is rich in theoretical implications. We have here a complex corpus – or rather two corpora – consisting of two sets of interrelated, mutually referent hypertexts, consisting in their turn of sharply delimited individual subtexts. It is my conviction that the textemic environment of a linguistic element is crucial to any structural evaluation of its function, by definition. This is the real significance and advantage of text-type linguistics (*Textsortenlinguistik*), see Adamzik (1995) – s.v. 'Briefe', and see numerous entries, e.g. Metzler (1985, 1986, 1987a, b); see Ermert (1979), Harweg (1979: 349ff.) for definitions, characterizations, variants and typologies of the ET.

The epistolary texteme, as *la parole* realization of emic letter exchange (correspondence: Harweg 1979: 354ff.) is an extended kind of locutive and allocutive dialogue, at the junction of dialogicity and monolocivity (cf. Diewald 1991: 300f.), with a special pragmatic (contextual) environment enframing the textual (co-textual) one.¹ The ET

shares the incompleteness² of the constitutive substructures of dialogue, and like them has both anaphoric and cataphoric ingredients. A crucial factor in its make-up seems to be deictic, namely the space-time distancing and delaying, the delayed decoding and responsive encoding, a distinctive junctural boundary separating the allocutive and responsive-reactive constituent subsystems, which are here ‘overblown’, and informing the entire reference systems of the text; the adjacency of the non-epistolary allocution and response results in a closer interference of the two constituents of the dialogue, cataphoric in the allocution, anaphoric in the response or reaction. Another definitional factor is thematic: the presupposition of shared familiarity. As in ‘real’ dialogue, the very presence of the addressee is a powerful informing factor. The internal thematic cohesion of the ET is loose; so is its generally fuzzy cohesion with the allocution-letter it responds to; it is less motivated and conditioned by its allocutive co-constituent (see *La Lettre* 1988: 19ff., 27ff.). The ET often superimposes another texteme – the expositive one – onto the basic dialogue; compare to a degree the rhetorical allocution, as e.g. in a homily or address. It may also superimpose a full-fledged narrative texteme onto the basic allocution.

As regards *register*, we have in the ET a rare instance of ‘written-spoken’ fused linguistic variety, or rather an overrule of the written vs. spoken differentiation – uniquely packaging the spoken as written³ – with a strong rhetorical potential (thus, for example, an epistolary narrative may exhibit grammatical features of rhetorical narrative). The issue of spoken-in-written-language was a fateful one for Kate Roberts.

Kate Roberts famously made use of the ‘llythyr gwneud’, an epistolary template which enframes and marks a story for specially personal focalization, in the narratological sense (consider ‘Torri trwy’r Cefndir’, in *Gobaith*, Roberts 1972, or ‘Yr Apêl’, in *Yr Wylan Deg*, Roberts 1976). This literary sub-genre is a simulation, and the following idiosyncrasies of the ET do not necessarily apply in it.

In the following presentation, unspecified text is by Kate Roberts, addressed to Saunders Lewis; ‘SL’ marks text by the latter.

2. The Nynegocentric Deixis: Epistolary Present and Present-Based Tenses; Epistolary Time Reference

Diewald (1991) is foremost among the rare discussions of deixis with reference to textual types (see also Harweg 1979). In the case of the ET, the locutive-and-allocutive communicative situation determines a certain deixis, which informs the entire grammatical system. The important locutive-personal temporal-deictic perspective (Langacker's 'egocentric viewing arrangement', see Diewald 1991: 76ff.)⁴ differs from the normal dialogic present, in that it is not really synchronous to both participants, and not clearly demarcated: this present is fuzzy and extensive, encompassing both sender's (real encoding-time) and recipient's (simulated, decoding-time) presents; even the prevalent Perfect (*wedi-*) is subsumed in the present.

Deixis in letters shows a peculiar parallax, absent in 'real' spoken dialogue, between the here-and-now of the writer and the subsequent one of the recipient-decoder: the decoding by the recipient must take account of this rather strange parallaxic factor. One of its consequences is the cancelling of the usual differentiation, rich in grammatical exponents, of narrative (historical, generic-atemporal) and report (present-based, 'nynegocentric' (in Damourette and Pichon's indispensable term); see Diewald 1991: 30ff.). There are of course two tenses whose time reference is the present, namely the periphrastic *yn-* present and the aorist. The latter raises more specifically the issue of *performatives*, in general and in epistolary context (Shisha-Halevy 1995 §3.3.3): there are several distinct subtypes, and they are nowhere more prominent than in the ET. (By the way, I prefer Erwin Koschmieder's *Koinzidenzfall*, as more apt for the majority of cases that do not properly refer to the performance of an act, but to precise synchronicity).

The locutive epistolary 'now' and its deictic temporal corollaries are probably not processed and decoded by the interlocutor-correspondent (as they have to be by a listener or reader of a narrative, where we have the narrator's 'now' and the actant's 'now') by relating them to the actual and real time of writing, but are often taken as a fuzzy common or shared virtual present, very different from the pragmatically precise dialogic 'now'. The respective 'arch-deictics' (*Archideiktikon*, Diewald 1991:

154ff.) ‘here’/‘now’ and ‘there’/‘then’ are fused to a degree, if not downright neutralized in the ET.

All this is of relevance for the valuing of tenses in the ET: the structural value of the *wedi*- periphrasis (as opposed to the recording preterite), which is not simply a *perfectum praesens* tense, and especially of the six futures, namely *am-*, *i-*, *mynd i-*, *bydd yn mynd i-*, *yn* + verb of movement and the aorist. Most of these are modal, expressing intent or respectively certainty or inevitability. Note the special role of present/future fuzziness or vagueness in instances of *fe* + aorist; also, the at-first-sight paradoxal coincidence of functional genericity and high pragmatic specificity in the aorist (also noted in the Turkish, English and Ancient Greek performatives). Observe also that the *yn*- present, when not actual, is often *habitual* (‘always’, ‘by habit’, . . . – not generic ‘by nature’ – this is admittedly a fine distinction); it is very rarely negated. Performatives, too, are as a rule and almost by definition affirmative. Performativity, always a complex locutive notion, has a unique place and constitutes a broad functional spectrum (flanking synchronous and generic presents) in an environment of overblown locutivity such as the ET.

Presents, Perfects and Futures

- 60 *Mae M. yn ei ddarllen rwan; ac yr wyf wedi ei dyngedu nad yw i siarad efo mi.*
 ‘M. is reading it now, and I have adjured him that he is not to talk to me.’
- SL 105 *Yr wyf yn cytuno bod ganddi beth dawn.*
 ‘I agree she has got some talent.’ (Not performative)
- 181 *A ydych yn cofio Ysgol Haf Machynlleth – 1926?*
 ‘Do you remember Machinlleth Summer School - 1926?’
- 197 *Mae ef yn credu mewn pregethu, ac nid wyf fi fawr erbyn hyn.*
 ‘He believes in preaching, and I don’t much, by now.’
- 44 *Yr wyf yn gadael popeth. . . hyd y munud olaf heb eu prynu.*
 ‘I put off buying everything . . . until the last minute.’

- SL 189 *Yr wyf yn fy melltithio am imi'n feddal roi drama ('Esther') i gwmi Sir Fôn.*
 'I curse myself for malleably giving a drama ('Esther') to the Sir Fôn Company.'
- 216 *Yr wyf yn lladrata amser y bore yma i sgrifennu . . .*
 'I am stealing time to write this morning . . .'
- SL 215 *Yn awr yr ydw i wedi pacio llond blwch o lyfrau a chymeraf hwynt yfory . . .*
 'Now, I have unpacked a boxful of books and will take them tomorrow . . .' (Note the adverbial presetting for the Perfect)
- SL 105 *Yr ydych wedi gorffen nofel, meddwch.*
 'You have finished a novel, you say.'
- SL 120 *Yr ydych wedi darllen peth o waith Proust.*
 'You have read a bit of the work of Proust.'
- 217 *Nid wyf wedi prynu llyfrau Cymraeg ers tro.*
 'I have not bought Welsh books for a while.'
- 42 *Yr wyf fi wedi clywed cyn hyn fy mod yn hoff o ddioid.*
 'I have heard before that I am fond of drink.'
- 230 *A ydych wedi darllen llyfr y Parch Gomer Roberts?*
 'Have you read the Revd Gomer Roberts's book?'
- 24 *Yr wyf am gael posters allan cyn cynted ag mae'n bosibl.*
 'I'd like to get posters out as soon as possible.'
- 37 *Rwan, yr wyf am ofyn ffafwr arbennig gennyhych chiwi.*
 'Now, I'm going to ask a special favour of you.' (Note the temporal presetting verging on sentence particle.)
- SL 25 *Yr wyf am ddyfod atoch i dê brynhawn Gwener.*
 'I'd like to come to you for tea on Friday afternoon'
- 51 *Mae Morus i gael wythnos o wyliau yn o fuan.*
 'Morris is to take a week of vacation pretty soon.'
- SL 154 *Byddaf yn mynd i fwrw'r hwyr gyda ef toc.*
 'I'll be going to spend the evening with him shortly.'

- 192 *Efo'r arian yr wyf yn mynd i Malta ar y dydd cyntaf o Fai.*
 'With the money, I'm going to Malta on the first day of May.'
- SL 16 *a phetawn i'n sgrifennu at rywun arall mi ddywedwn enw fy nghyfaill, ond atoch chi – na wnaf.*
 'And if I were writing to anyone else, I would mention my friend's name; but to you – I won't.'
- 189 *Nid anghofiaf fyth y perfformiad . . .*
 'I'll never forget the performance.'
- SL 178 *Diolch yn fawr am y David Bell. Fe'i hadolygaf gyda phleser.*
 'Thanks very much for the David Bell. I'll review it with pleasure.'
- SL 45 *Dyma'r testun . . . Fe welwch fod ynddo ddeunydd stori.*
 'Here's the topic . . . You'll see there is material for a story in it.'

Performatives (various types and grades)

- 26 *Tybed mai wrth fynd o Hirwaun y noson honno y cawsoch y ddamwain. Gobeithiaf nad te ddim.*
 'I wonder whether it was when you were going from Hirwaun that evening that you had the accident. I hope not.'
- 156 *Credaf, os medrwch, mai'r peth gorau fyddai i chwi ddweud. . .*
 'I believe that the best thing would be for you to tell the editor as soon as possible, if you can . . .'
- 27 *Hyderaf yn fawr nad yw eich niweidiau yn drwm . . .*
 'I earnestly hope that your injuries are not serious.'
- SL 232 *Clywaf newyddion hapus galonogol amdanoch chi.*
 'I hear happily heartening news about you.'
- 197 *Ofnaf na orffenaaf o gwbl y llyfr a arfaethwn . . .*
 'I fear that I shan't finish the book I was planning.'
- 56 *Cofiaf i bregethwr . . . ddefnyddio'r gair rebals.*
 'I remember a preacher . . . used the word "rebels".'

- 227 *Gobeithiaf fod eich iechyd yn well.*
'I hope your health is better.'
- 51 *Bwriadaf fynd i Gaerdydd wythnos i heddiw.*
'I mean to go to Cardiff a week from today.'
- 5 *A dwedyd y gwir, credaf fy mod yn anonest.*
'To tell the truth, I believe I am dishonest.'
- 5 *Cydolygaf a chwi'n hollol nad fy ngwir elfen yw ysgrifennu i blant.*
'I wholly agree with you that it is not my true element to write for children.'
- 32 *Diolchaf i chwi o waelod fy nghalon am eich llythyr.*
'I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your letter.'
- 216 *Ymddiheuraf am yr holl oedi yma.*
'I apologize for all this delay.'
- SL 45 *Ofnaf y byddai ei darllen ar hyn o bryd yn boenus.*
'I fear that reading it at this time would be painful for you.'
- 11 *Modd bynnag, mi gaf un (i.e. cyfarfod) yno ymhen ryw bythefnos, ac yn y cyfamser fe gaf gyfarfodydd yn Llwydcoed, Abercwmboi a Chwmaman.*
'At any rate, I'll have one (meeting) there in about a fortnight, and in the meantime I'll have meetings in Llwydcoed, Abercwmboi and Cwmaman.'

Synchronous present

- 26 *Â trefnu'r cyngerdd yn Llangollen ymlaen yn hwylus.*
'Arranging the concert in Llangollen is going along without any problem.'
- SL 36 *Nid am fy mod yn credu y rhaid bod yn annedwydd er mwyn cyfansoddi y dywedaf hynny.*
'It's not because I believe that, in order to compose, it is necessary to be unhappy, that I say that.'

- 184 *Ar frys y gwnaf bob dim yrwan . . .*
 ‘I’m doing everything in a rush now.’
- 190 *erbyn hyn poenaf yn arw.*
 ‘I worry terribly by now.’
- 203 *Ychydig iawn o lyfrau a brynaf yrwan.*
 ‘I buy very few books nowadays.’
- 6 *Ond teifl Katherine Mansfield hwy oll i’r cysgod.*
 ‘But Katherine Mansfield throws them all into shadow.’
- 205 *Ni ddywed ddim ond ‘ie’ ac ‘nage’.*
 ‘He says nothing but “yes” and “no”.’
- 211 *Amgaeaf gas eich llythyr chi fel y daeth inni o’r post.*
 ‘I enclose the envelope of your letter as it reached us from the post.’
- 181 *Os dechreuaf ddweud dim amdanaf fy hun . . . mi af ar unwaith yn anonest.*
 ‘If I begin to say anything about myself, . . . I become dishonest at once.’ (Not necessarily future apodosis!)
- SL 179 *Felly mi obeithiaf am gael gwranddo ar eich drama cyn hir.*
 ‘So I hope to get to listen to your play before long.’
- SL 203 *deallaf mar gwr ifanc tawel a diymhongar swil ydy’r nofelydd.*
 ‘I understand that the novelist is a silent and unassumingly shy young man.’

Generic present

- 156 *Teimlaf weithiau y dylwn werthu’r ty yma . . .*
 ‘Sometimes I feel that I ought to sell this house.’
- SL 21 *Teimlaf y dyddiau hyn bod trol wedi mynd drosod a’m gadael yn fflat.*
 ‘These days I feel that a cart has gone over me and left me flat.’
- SL 45 *Clywaf yn aml iawn werthfawrogi eich erthyglau.*
 ‘I hear your articles appreciated very often.’

- 5 *Edmygaf gryn lawer o bobl.*
'I admire a good many people.'
- 202 *Bwriadaf eu ysrifennu yn yr iaith symlaf posibl.*
'I intend to write them in the simplest possible language.'
- 101 *Os bydd modd a rhwyddyneb, gwnaf fy ngorau.*
'If there's means and convenience, I'll do my best.'

3. Presentation

This is a special feature, both dialogic and narrative, absent in the typical North-West European *Sprachbund*, but consequential in Celtic and other linguistic groups.⁵ Two presentative signals occur in the ET:

Dyma – cataphoric; *hic-et-nunc*, situationally referent synchronous-coinciding; not pronominally referent, nor of nynegocentric reference;

Dyna – anaphoric; situationally as well as pronominally referent; of distal reference.

Especially interesting, I find, are the narrative and reporting periphrastic verb forms compounded of a presentative and preposition + infinitive converb. In non-epistolary narrative, these have various superordinating focalizing roles (Shisha-Halevy 1997; 1998: 186, 192; 1999: 221ff.). In the ET, this is strikingly replaced by highlighting in the 'narrative of life', of the everyday world, and is remarkably not superordinative.

- SL 45 *Canys dyma'r testun – y nos Iau honno yn Llandeilo, y cwbl, yr episôd gyda'r plismyn ar y llawr . . .*
'For here's the topic – that Thursday night in Llandeilo, the whole lot, the episode with the policemen on the floor . . .'
- SL 50 *Ond dyma fy neges i heddiw – yr wyf wedi ymddiswyddo o fod yn arholydd.*
'But here's my message today – I have quit being an examiner.'

- 58 *Dyma fi, fis ar ôl mis, yn crafangio am rywbeth i'w ddywedyd.*
 'Here I am, month after month, clutching for something to say.'
- SL 101 *Y mae'r rheswm am fy sicrwydd yn siml a dyma fo: . . .*
 'The reason for my certainty is simple, and here it is: . . .'
- SL 101 *A dyma sibrwd yn eich clust – darllennais ddwy act . . .*
 'And here's whispering in your ear - I have read two acts . . .'
- 22 *A dyma chithau yn rhoi ynni corff ac enaid i Williams Pantycelyn.*
 'And here you are, endowing Pantycelin with energy of body and soul.'
- 72 *Dyna fi wedi darllen rwan, The Journal of a Disappointed Man (Barbellion), Impressions that Remained (Ethel Smith), Journal Marie Bashkirtseff, My Life (Isadora Duncan) . . .*
 'I have now read: *The Journal of a Disappointed Man* (Barbellion), *Impressions that Remained* (Ethel Smith), Marie Bashkirtseff's *Journal*, *My Life* (Isadora Duncan) . . .' (This is a notable exception to the reference vector rule for *dyma* and *dyna*. I have not collated the text.)
- 31 *Ond dyna fo – antur yw hi bob amser.*
 'And there it is - it's always an adventure.'
- 195 *Yr oedd arnaf eisiau dweud y pethau yna, a dyna fo.*
 'I needed to say these things, and there it is.'
- 73 *Pan ddarllennais am 'y tynerwch garw' fe ddychrynnais, oblegid dyna'r geiriau a fuasai'n disgrifio mam i'r dim.*
 'When I read about the "rough tenderness", I took fright, for those are the words that would describe my mother precisely.'
- SL 180 *Aeddfedrwydd, dyna, mi dybiais i, rinwedd y ddrama.*
 'Maturity, that, I thought, was the play's virtue.'

4. Focalization, Rhematization, Topicalization and Thematization Features

Focus, focalization, *mise en relief* and prominence marking are very complicated and still largely imperfectly understood phenomena of language, often obscured by terminological light-handedness. As is well known, Welsh disposes of several means of marking focus and topic, concepts of the ultraclausal information structure, syntactical means which correlate to a functional spectrum of environment-dependent highlighting: the Cleft Sentence – not a single pattern but a pattern set; typographical marking of focused segments (a written iconic approximation to and simulation of prosodic markedness in the spoken language); textual configurations and other specialized constructions; *fe-* and *mi-* (I discussed these a decade ago, 1995: §3.2.1, for Islwyn Ffowc Elis's *Y Cromlech yn yr Haidd*, and hope to have shown that their mutual opposition signals perspective: detachment or the delocutive perspective for *fe-*, speaker's involvement or the interlocutive perspective for *mi-*). This modality feature belongs, I believe, in the phenomenology of focus. *Fe-* has additional superordinating roles. Both converters occur in our epistolary corpus – in both KR's and SL's letters – and a preliminary evaluation points to a similar functioning. In narrative passages (see also below), *fe-* introduces significant acts and opens new information chunks; outside narrative, *mi-* (interlocutive), *fe-* (delocutive) seems often grammaticalized or formalized in normal declarative – non-performative – modality, but occasionally serve as a thematic prop for a focused verb form (in 'envelope focusing' – of lexeme or nexus: Shisha-Halevy 1998: 28, 34). However, most remarkable in the ET is the typically dialogic *pragmatic* contextuality, rather than cotextuality of focus, encountered in extensive textual environment.

- 131 ond, ni *chymeraf ddimai*.
 'But I won't take a halfpenny.'
- 219 . . . *er ei bod yn golygu cost a thrafferth i gadw'r ty yn gynnes*.
 Ond mae o'n gynnes.
 '. . . although it means cost and trouble to keep the house warm.
 But it *is* warm...'

- 18 *Oes, y mae dylanwad amlwg Williams Parry ar yr 'Alltud'.*
 'Yes, there is clear influence of Williams Parry in "Exile".'
- 37 *Wrth gwrs gall Bernard Shaw fforddio sgrifennu ei ragymadroddion ei hun ond ni gallaf fi.*
 'Of course, Bernard Shaw can afford to write his own introductions, but I cannot.'
- SL 14 *Y mae arnaf innau fawr ofn pwyllgor y Blaid yng Nghaernarfon.*
 'I too don't fear the Party's council in Caernarfon much.'
- 180 *Nid ceisio rhoi fy syniad am y Purdan a wneuthum . . . gweld yr wyf fi mai'r meddianu yma sy'n gwneud pobl yn anhapus.*
 'I did not try to present my idea of Purgatory . . . What I see is that it is this possession that is making people unhappy, possession of wealth.'
- SL 202 *Ar erthyglau ysbeidiol yn unig yr wyf innau'n gweithio ar hyn o bryd.*
 'It's only on occasional articles that I am working at this time.'
- SL 101 *Amdanaf innau, mi allaf wynebu sosial os bydd rhaid.*
 'As for me, I can face a social evening, if necessary.'
- 197 *Am y sgwrs efo Valentine, y peth mwyaf diddorol ynglyn â hi oedd inni gael prynhawn cyfan o sgwrsio.*
 'As for the conversation with Valentine, the most interesting thing about it was that we got an entire afternoon of talking.'
- SL 14 *Am gylchgrawn – nid peth drwg a fyddai'n wir, ond bydd yn llawer o waith hefyd i rywrai.*
 'As for a journal – truly, it wouldn't be a bad thing, but it will also be lots of work for some.'
- 5 *I mi, mae ôl ymdrech ar bob stori a sgrifennais.*
 'For me, there is a mark of effort in every story I have written.'
- 87 *Iddynt hwy, achosion economaidd yw achos pob rhyfel a'r unig achos. Imi, ni ddangosodd dim erioed yn well na'r cyfarfod hwn i'r fath dir y syrthiodd gweithwyr De Cymru.*

‘For them, the cause of every war, and the only cause, is an economic cause. For me, nothing has ever shown better than this meeting, on what kind of land the workers of South Wales have fallen.’

SL 16 *a phetawn i'n sgrifennu at rywun arall mi ddywedwn enw fy nghyfaill, ond atoch chi – na wnaf.*

‘And if I were writing to anyone else, I would mention my friend’s name; but to you – I won’t.’

180 *Wel, mi hoffais eich drama.*

‘Well, I liked your play.’

3 *Mwynheais eich araith, ac fe wnaeth pawb mi gredaf.*

‘I enjoyed your lecture, and so did everyone, I believe’

SL 105 *Felly fe newidiodd y cwbl.*

‘So the whole changed.’

SL 185 *Mi sgrifennaf ato i ddiolch ac mi ddywedaf . . .*

‘I’ll write to him to thank him and say . . .’

21 *Modd bynnag, gofynnodd MW imi anfon ei nofel i Wrecsam . . . Fe wneuthum, a chefais gais oddiyno i ddywedyd fy marn amdano.*

‘Anyway, MW asked me to send his novel to Wrexham . . . I did, and got a request from them to give my opinion about it.’

11 *Modd bynnag, mi gaf un (i.e. cyfarfod) yno ymhen ryw bythefnos, ac hyn y cyfamser fe gaf gyfarfodydd yn Llwydcoed, Abercwmboi a Chwmaman.*

‘At any rate, I’ll have one (meeting) there within a few fortnights, and in the meantime I’ll have meetings in Llwydcoed, Abercwmboi and Cwmaman.’

5. The Epistolary Narrative

The epistolary narrative is simpler, less sophisticated than the ‘normal’ one, which, in reality, is (like the ET) an (over-) expanded allocution. It too is informed by the nynegocentric perspective: the common occurrence of the *wedi*-perfect, a tense not typical of diegetic narratives,

is significant. We find no Evolution Mode/Comment Mode stratification (and the resulting distinctive functioning of narrative tenses, e.g. reduction in the range of the Imperfect); no Narrative vs. Report sub-textemic differentiation; no narrative focusing or highlighting (and resulting special functioning of the converter *fe-* and of *gwneud* periphrasis – see Shisha-Halevy 1998: Chapter One); use of the ‘log-book infinitive’ as well as the narrative *a* + INFINITIVE or hyper-events (for both, see Shisha-Halevy 1997); also, special chunking and articulation discourse signals.

56 *Peth arall, digwydodd hyn yn Rhosgadfan noson cyn y polio. Siaradai Mr. Goronwy Owen yno ac yr oedd dau blismon gydag ef. Pan ofynnwyd cwestiynau iddo, dechreuodd wylltio a'n galw yn bob enw ac yn y diwedd ebr efo: . . .*

‘Another thing: this happened in Rhosgadfan the evening before the polling. Mr. Goronwy Owen was speaking there and there were two policemen with him. When questions were put to him, he lost his temper and called us by every name and at the end said:...

SL 179f. *Yr oedd ‘At home’ gwraig y prifathro o 6 pm hyd 7.30; a minnau’n paratoi i fynd dyma deulu o’r Amerig yn glanio yn y ty . . . Buont yma hanner awr neu ragor, ac am ddeg munud wedi chwech cychwynnais yn y car modur am dy’r prifathro. Cyrraedd yno tua 6.30 . . . Cadw fy llygaid ar y cloc, yfed tri sierri a siarad yma ac acw . . . ac yna ddau funud i saith ffarwelio’n bendant . . . a gyrru fy nghar o’r ty . . . a throi radio fy nghar i wrando ar eich ‘Cynddrws’ ac yno y bûm yn gwrando i’r pen . . . Wel, mi hoffais eich drama.*

‘The principal’s wife’s ‘at home’ was from 6 pm to 7.30; when I prepared to go there, relatives from America landed at my place . . . They were there half an hour or more, and about ten minutes after six I set out in the car for the professor’s house. I arrived at about 6.30 . . . I kept my eye on the clock, drank three sherries and conversed here and there . . . and then, two minutes to seven, definitely took leave . . . and drove my car away from the house . . . and turned my car’s radio on to listen to your

‘Outer Door’, and there I was, listening to the end. Well, I liked your play.’ (Note here the interplay of the ‘log-book infinitive’ (Shisha-Halevy 1997) with other narrative tenses.)

227 *Syrthiais wrth olchi'r feranda a thaflu fy ysgwydd o'i lle. Rhuthrwyd fi i'r ysbyty . . . Bûm mor sâl y bu'n rhaid fy nghadw yno drwy'r nos. Bu fy mraich mewn sling am fis ac ni fedrwn wneud dim. Ond bu cymdogion ac eraill yn garedig iawn wrthyf.*

‘I fell while washing the balcony and dislocated my shoulder. I was rushed to the hospital . . . I was so ill that they had to keep me there overnight. My arm was in a sling for a month and I could not do anything. But neighbours and others were very kind to me.’

SL 228 *Mynd yr oeddwn i Lundain yn bennaf i weld fy hen ffrind David Jones. Un diwrnod i mi fy hun, megis, a gefais i yn Llundain. Rhoddais pedair awr i arddangosfa Claude Lorrain . . . Wedyn, mi es i ddrama Arthur Miller, The Price . . .*

‘I went to London mainly to see my old friend David Jones. Thus, it is no more than one day that I had in London to myself. I devoted four hours to Claude Lorrain’s exhibition . . . Afterwards, I went to Arthur Miller’s play, *The Price* . . .

SL 3 *Yr oeddwn i yng Nghaerdydd ddydd Gwener a gwelais W. J. Gruffydd yno, ac fe ddywedodd wrthyf ei fod newydd dderbyn stori gennyh.*

‘I was in Cardiff on Friday, and saw W. J. Gruffydd there, and he told me that he had just received a story by you.’

6. Allocutive / Reactive Elements in the ET: Juncture Features

The distancing (pragmatic time-and-space) boundary of allocution and response in the ET, informing its grammar, has many consequences in the grammatical detail. For example, a full repetition of the question does not signal here sarcasm, irritation or other overtones, but is simply due to the junctural factor. Note also the explicit or implicit lemmatic and thematic quotation in the response from the relevant allocution to which it is

oriented. Dialogic clause patterns and discourse signals are encountered, not as a stylistic mannerism, simulation or reproduction of a spoken and colloquial idiom, but as real allocution or response. Allocution-final particles like *ynte* (cf. the colloquial German final tag-particle ‘oder?’), or response-initial pro-clauses like *do* serve as cohesion signals, linking the epistolary subtexts and indeed the two constituent epistolary corpora. I find especially interesting the thematic role assigned in the response letter to elements quoted from the allocution one.

While internal juncture features in the ET are on first sight not different from other textemes (see Shisha-Halevy 2003), this impression is provisional, in need of further detailed study (see Harweg 1979: 351ff. for pronominal reference in letters).

- 9 *Peth fel yna ydyw ynte?*
 ‘She is something like this, isn’t she?’
- 51 *Dyna’r term Cymraeg am double pneumonia ynte?*
 ‘That’s the Welsh term for double pneumonia, isn’t it?’
- SL 105 *Nofel am deulu’n dwad i lawr i Gwm Rhondda . . . oedd i fod, onidê?*
 ‘It was to be a novel about a family coming down to the Rhondda Valley, was it not?’
- SL 118 *Da iawn, onidê?*
 ‘Very good, aren’t they?’
- 131 *Gresyn garw am fam Prosser ynte?*
 ‘A terrible shame about Prosser’s mother, isn’t it?’
- 181 *A ydych yn cofio Ysgol Haf Machynlleth – 1926?*
 ‘Do you remember Machynlleth Summer School – 1926?’
- 18 *Oes, y mae dylanwad amlwg Williams Parry ar yr ‘Alltud’.*
 ‘Yes, there is clear influence of Williams Parry in “Exile”.’
- 5 *Do, fe ddarllenais un gyfrol o’i heiddo.*
 ‘Yes, I read one volume of hers.’
- SL 60 *Wel, cafeich gweled eich dau.*
 ‘Well, I’ll get to see you two.’

- 218 *Wel! Mae EP yn traethu meddyliau llawer o bobol ifanc y Blaid heddiw.*
 ‘Well, EP is discussing the thoughts of many of the Party’s young people of today.’
- 37 *Rwan, yr wyf am ofyn ffafr arbennig gennych chiwi.*
 ‘Now, I want to ask a special favour of you.’
- 49 *Soniech am briodi yn yr Eglwys.*
 ‘You mention getting married in a Church.’
- 204 *Soniech am John Rowlands; ie, bachgen swil iawn ydyw.*
 ‘You mention John Rowlands; yes, he’s a really shy boy.’
- SL 105 *Yr ydych wedi gorffen nofel, meddwch.*
 ‘You have finished a novel, you say.’
- SL 120 *Yr ydych wedi darllen peth o waith Proust.*
 ‘You have read some of Proust’s work.’ (There is no explicit signal of quotedness other than the second-person form of the perfect tense.)

7. Parenthesis

Prosodically marked in spoken discourse and often marked in writing, this junctural delimitation phenomenon is quintessentially expositive, not dialogic. Note the converter *mi-* with performatives in this status (*zero* conversion is typical of performatives as a rule).

- SL 180 *Aeddfedrwydd, dyna, mi dybiais i, rinwedd y ddrama.*
 ‘Maturity, that, I thought, was the play’s virtue.’
- SL 108 *Ond y gwir, mi gredaf, yw eich bod . . . yn gwrthod ymdrin .*
 ‘But the truth, I believe, is that you refuse to treat . . .’ (Similar are SL 133, KR 210, not different from *ond mi gredaf rywsut fod . . .* SL 4.)
- SL 4 *Gallwch, mi farnaf i, ei chyhoeddi’n ddiogel.*
 ‘You can, I judge, publish it safely.’

- 3 *Mwynheais eich araith yma'n fawr iawn. Ac fe wnaeth pawb mi gredaf.*
'I greatly enjoyed your speech there. And so did everyone, I believe.'
- 29 *. . . ac mae'r graith yno byth (ar fy ngwddf a feddyliaf ar nid ar yr ysbyty) . . .*
' . . . and the scar is there still (on my neck I mean, and not on the hospital) . . .'

Other topics of epistolary grammar, which I shall no more than briefly mention here, are noun specificity, especially of the non-anaphoric but exophoric or intertextual kind: the presupposition of familiarity in the limited 'I-you-we two' world of discourse – in which the assumed constant presence of the addressee is pivotal – results in some special cases of deictic specificity marking. Then, various consequences of the pragmatic envelope of the epistolary texts (in Ancient Egyptian, 'perishable' letters – written on ostraca – differ considerably in grammatical means from the more formal letters, written on expensive papyrus. Consider the current e-mail letter, with its orthographical and syntactical idiosyncracies and its effect on the evolution of contemporary English). The issue of genericity (nominal and verbal), extratemporality or atemporality, as manifested in the nominal sentence (discussed in Shisha-Halevy 1998, Chapter Three, for Modern Welsh, and 1999 for Middle Welsh); internal and external general and particularly 'neutric' reference, with *hi*, *zero* and *o* (masculine) respectively carrying the functional distinction between external-situational (from the *hic-et-nunc* point of reference), specifically-cotextual (anaphoric or cataphoric) or fuzzily cotextual; and many others.

Notes

1. The epistolary textual type (*Textsorte*) is generally defined pragmatically, by communicative situation, and not by grammatical phenomenology.
2. 'Incompletude': the distinctive and inherent quality of being incomplete.
3. A by-definition written dialogic linguistic form – see Householder (1971: Chapter 13, 'The Primacy of Writing'). This adds to the interest, even piquancy of the discussed texteme as a case of 'recorded speech', in an intellectual climate which regards discourse (as in 'Discourse Analysis') as primarily spoken.
4. In the ET, locutivity by and large overrules allocutivity: see Harweg (1979: 271f., 357f.).
5. See Shisha-Halevy (1998: 184ff.; 1999: Appendix II).

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