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Tradition and innovation in Welsh detransitive markers: The spread of *X hun*

While the reflexive markers of most European languages, like e.g. German *sich* or French *se* are based on the PIE reflexive pronoun **s(w)e*, the English and the neighbouring Insular Celtic languages Welsh and Irish employ different markers. Their formal similarity is especially close between English and Welsh. Both languages have complex markers consisting of an invariable part, *self* in English and *hun(an)* in Welsh and a pronoun inflecting according to person, number and gender, i.e. Engl. *myself, yourself, him/her/itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves*, Welsh *fy hun(an), dy hun(an), ei hun(an), ein hun(ain), eich hun(ain), eu hun(ain)*. In addition, both markers originate from intensifiers and are still used in this function.

In both languages, this situation is the result of rather recent innovations. In Middle Welsh, the verbal prefix *ym-*, which is commonly described as a marker of reciprocity and reflexivity, actually displays various context-dependent detransitivising functions. Reflexive *ym*-verbs include not only full reflexives, but the whole range of middle situation types as established by Kemmer 1993. On the discourse-pragmatic level, the *ym*-VERB *a(c)*-construction as discontinuous reciprocal construction demotes untopical participants of reciprocal events (Irslinger 2017).

From the Early Modern period onwards, *X hun(ain)* starts to replace *ym-* as a marker of reflexivity and other detransitive domains. The present paper will discuss this process, focussing on a selection of 15th and 16th century texts. Special attention will be drawn on the role of linguistic convergence with English.

Irslinger, Britta. 2017: Detransitive strategies in Middle Welsh: The preverbal marker *ym-*. In: *Referential Properties and Their Impact on the Syntax of Insular Celtic languages*. Eds. Erich Poppe, Karin Stüber & Paul Widmer. Münster, Nodus: 91-134.

Kemmer, S. 1993: *The middle voice*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia.