

Clausology Review #1

Nach Nach . . .

We have had some handouts in the past, plus some review last time, on the ways we connect clauses together in Irish. Our big choices are:

- ◆ **Type A: Indirect Speech and Opinions/Wishes**, the "I said that" and "We hope that" kinds of things.
- ◆ **Type B: Where "that" refers to the subject or object of the clause.** "The car that hit the dog," "The dog that the car hit." These are the so-called "direct relative" clauses.
- ◆ **Type C: Where "that" refers to a noun or pronoun that is either the object of a preposition, or that is related to the subject of the clause through some kind of genitive/possessive relation.** "The coffin the corpse is in," "The woman whose son is crazy." These are the so-called "indirect relative" clauses.

Our previous approach -- and the one you usually get from textbooks -- is to identify the type of clause it is, *the grammatical situation*, and then generate the correct forms of the particles and verbs to get the job done.

Let's Go the Other Way

Having done that (including a recent review at Winona for several students), let's work the other way. Let's get familiar with the structures, with the grammatical forms, and then work back to the meaning.

One of the challenges with studying Direct Relatives as one unit, and Indirect Relatives as another, is that sometimes they are different, and sometimes they are the same, in terms of particles and verb forms. We actually get confused as we try to learn the same thing in different contexts!

So, we'll start with the one thing that is stable across all these clauses: the use of *Nach*.

NACH NACH: THE JOKE'S ON US

It is almost a joke, studying relative clauses, in the sense that we go through all of these tortured explanations, and then we realize that when *nach* is involved, the story is generally the same. True, there are some things about the clauses and sentences that we have to pay attention to, but:

nach is always followed by eclipsis and the dependent form of the verb
(if available), no matter what its function.

That means that *as far as the particle and the following verb are concerned*, **you don't have to know** whether you have indirect speech, or a direct relative clause, or an indirect relative clauses, or even a question. (You have to know what you're trying to say to make *everything* come out right, but it doesn't matter to the verb.)

So, everything you have to know is:

1. Nach is used for all regular verb tenses except the past.
2. It is always followed by eclipsis, including vowels: *nach n-itheann sí . . .* (There is no d' before a vowel or f.)
3. For **irregular verbs that have dependent forms**, the dependent form is used **and** *nach* is used in the past instead of *nár* in most cases (sometimes you have a choice, but you're always safe using *nach*): *nach bhfuil*, *nach ndearna*, *nach ndeacha*.

That's it. So, for our friend *tá*, you could have:

- ◆ **A negative question:** *Nach bhfuil sé amaideach?* Isn't he foolish?
- ◆ **Indirect Speech:** *Deir a mháthair nach bhfuil sé amaideach.* His mother says he is *not* foolish.
- ◆ **Opinion/Feelings:** *Tá súil agam nach bhfuil sé amaideach.* I hope he is not foolish.
- ◆ **Direct Relative:** *Chiceáil mé an buachaill nach bhfuil amaideach.* I kicked the boy who is not foolish. (non-*Tá* example: *Seo é an buachaill nach gceicéálann siad ariamh.* Here is the boy they never kick.)
- ◆ **Indirect Relative:** *Chiceáil mé an bhean nach bhfuil a mac amaideach.* I kicked the woman whose son is not foolish. *Chiceáil mé an bosca nach bhfuil an cat ann.* I kicked the box the cat is *not* in (it).

MASTERING THE PATTERNS

First, pay attention to *nach* connections whenever you see them. Start a nice collection, so you see the same structure over and over in one place.

Production now becomes easy. As soon as you have to connect clauses or sentences together with a "not" conjunction in any other tense other than the past, with a regular verb, you have all you need to know. Just *nach* it. The particle + verb part of the sentence, for anything that involves *nach*, will never vary. (And you'll use this for irregular verbs that have dependent forms in the past, too.)

Then, if you just think about what you are trying to say, getting the rest of the sentence to work isn't too much trouble. Let's look at the patterns for the different uses.

Type A: Indirect Speech & Opinions/Wishes/Feelings

<p>Dúirt sé nach bhfuil sé tinn. Deir sí nach bhfuil an fear sin tinn. Is dóigh liom nach bhfuil sí tinn, dáiríre. Deirtear nach gceicéálann sise a cat. Ní chreidim nach mbreathnaíonn sé ar an teilifís ariamh. Tá súil agam nach dtabharfaidh siad dom é. Ceapaim nach bhfaca an cailín an carr.</p>	<p>These work very much like the corresponding English sentences, so they usually aren't too hard to figure out.</p> <p>Note that the clause, starting with "nach", is pretty much a complete sentence, and that it has its own subject. These clauses can stand alone as questions that make sense without any other context, generally: <i>Nach bhfuil sí tinn?</i></p> <p>They don't usually end in a prepositional pronoun (in it, on it, etc.). Where there <i>is</i> a preposition or prepositional pronoun, as in the last example, it has its own object -- that is, the preposition isn't referring back to something that comes before the "nach."</p>
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Type B: Direct Relative Clauses

<p>Seo é an fear nach bhfuil tinn.</p> <p>Cá bhfuil an bhean nach bhfuil saibhir?</p> <p>Sin é an cailín nach gciceálfaidh a cat.</p> <p>Cé acu an cat nach gciceálann sí?</p> <p>Labhair mé leis an bhfear nach mbreathnaíonn ar an teilifís.</p> <p>Ní maith liom an leaid nach dtabharfadh aon airgead dom.</p> <p>Sin í an cailín nach bhfaca an carr.</p> <p>Sin í an carr nach bhfaca an cailín.</p>	<p>In this "bucket" we find clauses in which a subject would be linked with either a description (adjective) or a direct object of the action: "He is sick," "She kicks cats," etc.</p> <p>The clause cannot stand alone without the part that comes before the "nach." "Nach" connects the clause to the "antecedent" in the first part of the sentence, and that antecedent is either the "doer" or the "do-ee" of the clause.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ If the thing referred to is the subject of the clause, there will be <i>no subject</i> in the clause itself. ◆ If the thing referred to is the object of the action, there <i>WILL</i> be a subject in the clause itself (but of course, the object will be missing in the clause). <p>As in the previous situation, you may encounter prepositions and prepositional pronouns in the clause, but they will refer to <i>other</i> objects of the prepositions, <i>not</i> to something that comes before the nach.</p>
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Type C: Indirect Relative Clauses

<p>Seo é an fear nach bhfuil a bhean tinn.</p> <p>Cá bhfuil an bhean nach bhfuil a fear saibhir?</p> <p>Cé acu an clár teilifíse nach mbreathnaíonn an fear sin air?</p> <p>Sin é an bosca nach gcoinníonn muid ár mbia ann.</p> <p>Feicim an leaid nach dtabharfadh sí aon airgead dó.</p> <p>Is é Seán an fear nach labhraím leis.</p> <p>Chuir mé an bia ar an mbord nach bhfaca mé madra air.</p>	<p>In terms of meaning, these clauses involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the object of a preposition, or ◆ a possession/genitive relationship. <p>These clauses <i>will</i> make a question by themselves, grammatically speaking, but you cannot answer these questions without more information. In other words, a question like "Nach bhfuil a bhean tinn?" makes no sense unless you are already talking about "him" or pointing at the "him" implied by the possessive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ For the possessive, look for a "possessed" or genitive-relationship thing as the subject: "whose son," etc. ◆ For the object of a preposition, note that the preposition in the clauses refers to a noun or pronoun already mentioned before the "nach," unlike the prepositional pronoun you might find in the other two types. In English, we say, "the man I do not speak to," but in Irish, we say, "the man I do not speak to him."
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Quick Recognition Tips Summary for "Nach"

- ◆ If the clause can be used as a question on its own, without modification, it is Type A: indirect speech & opinions, wishes, etc.
- ◆ If the clause does not have a subject, it is a *direct relative*, Type B.
- ◆ If the clause has a prepositional pronoun at the end **AND** that prepositional more or less "repeats" a reference to something before the "nach," this is Type C, an *indirect relative clause*. These are sentences like, "The man to whom it was not done to (him)."
- ◆ If the clause has a subject and transitive verb (one where the action is "done to" something or someone), but doesn't have an object of the action, it is Type B, *direct*, again.