

- b. A woman realtor makes very good sense. Women know more about kitchens than men. By and large, **#it's the house that the woman buys**. Most men, in my experience, let the wife decide.

In Chapter 2, the discourse-pragmatic notions which are crucial to this dissertation ('topic-comment', 'cognitive status', and 'accent') are introduced and defined. Also introduced is a set of universal principles (the 'topic familiarity principle', the 'given-before-new principle' and 'first-things-first principle') proposed in Gundel (1985, 1988) to govern discourse pragmatic notions and their interaction with syntactic structure

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the structure of English clefts, with emphasis placed on their character as a subclass of copular sentences. While I accept the traditional view that the copula and cleft pronoun make no crucial contribution to the final truth conditions of a cleft sentence, I argue that the copula and the cleft pronoun are both critically involved in the mapping from syntactic form to semantic and pragmatic interpretation.

In Chapter 3, I suggest that Partee's (1986) analysis of the distinction between 'specificational pseudoclefts,' such as (5a), and 'predicational pseudoclefts,' such as (5b), can be insightfully extended to clefts.

- (5) a. What John is is a nuisance to himself.
b. What John is is a nuisance to him.

As an alternative to the traditional view which distinguishes two copulas, Partee suggests that there is only a single copula, which takes one referential argument and one predicative argument, but in either order. The specificational pseudocleft can then be analyzed as taking a predicative subject and a referential complement, i.e. as simply the inverse of the predicational pseudocleft, which takes a referential subject and a predicative complement.

I propose that specificational clefts, like (3a) above, have a semantic inverse in the class of 'predicational clefts', identified in Ball 1977. Thus, the predicational cleft in (6a) is paraphrased not by the simple sentence obtained through inserting the clefted constituent into the 'gap' of the cleft clause—i.e. (6b), but rather by the predicational copular sentence in (6c)

- (6) a. **It was an odd televised ceremony that I watched from my living room**, and a touching one...[Goodman, 1985, Keeping in Touch, p.194]
b. **I watched an odd televised ceremony from my living room**, and a touching one.
c. **The televised ceremony that I watched from my living room was an odd one**, and a touching one.

The copula in clefts thus plays its usual compositional role as a reversible linking verb signalling that the predicative argument should be applied to the referential argument, regardless of linear order. I

suggest further that the commonly noted quantifier and predicate constraints on permissible clefted constituents can be profitably analyzed as semantic constraints, since the post-copular argument of a specificational sentence must be semantically ‘referential,’ instead of ‘quantificational’ like the one in (7a), or ‘predicative’ like the one in (7b).

- (7) a. ?It is someone who buys the house.
b. ?It is angry that I am.

An advantage to adopting Partee’s framework is that pragmatically sensitive exceptions to these semantic constraints can be attributed to ‘type-shifting’: a quantificational or predicative expression may indeed be felicitously clefted, but only in contexts which support a referential construal.

In Chapter 4, it is argued that the cleft pronoun is a predicative pronoun co-specifying the predicate denoted by the cleft clause, an adaptation of the view of Bolinger 1972 and Gundel 1977 that the cleft ‘expletive’ has referential content. Cleft pronouns convey the same range of deictic information that referential pronouns do, and vary in form in colloquial discourse, depending on the cognitive status of the predicate denoted by the cleft clause, giving rise to the ‘th-clefts’ of Bolinger 1972 and Ball 1977. For example:

- (8) MK: There **IS** something that happened here that you might not know about.
NH: Fred Lukermann resigned.
MK: Oh, that’s right — you talked to Karen.
NH: No, **this was Jeanette who told me** — I talked to her last Sunday.
[telephone conversation, 10/89]
- (9) NH: That’s the reason I don’t want to go to Miami.
BP: Wasn’t **that somewhere in southern Florida where they thought those people got AIDS from bug bites** — getting bit a hundred times a night or something, because the place was so roach infested?
[conversation, 2/89]

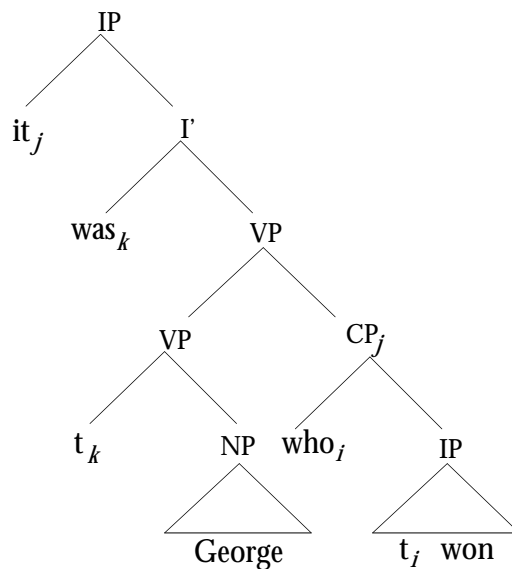
The discourse context of the *this*-cleft in (8) supports the speaker’s assumption that the addressee is consciously aware of the information denoted by the cleft clause—i.e. that someone told the speaker that Fred Lukermann resigned. In contrast, the speaker of the *that*-cleft in (9) only expects the addressee to be familiar with the proposition denoted by the cleft clause but not necessarily to be consciously aware of it at the time of utterance.

The cleft pronoun is invariant when it denotes a predicate, as in (10), but agrees in number with the clefted constituent when it denotes an entity, as in (11), giving further support to the hypothesis that clefts exhibit the specificational-predicational distinction characteristic of copular sentences in general:

- (10) A: But it goes much further than Vietnam — it's general antimilitarism.
 B: **That was our right-wingers who got us into that** you see.
 [Geluykens, 1983, C13]
- (11) BP: It may be that fanatical Muslims are even more stupid than fanatical Christians.
 EM: But **these are students who are rioting!**
 [conversation, 2/14/189]

After arguing that the cleft clause is syntactically just a relative clause, and that the clefted constituent forms a constituent with the cleft clause, I suggest the syntactic analysis in (12), which encodes by coindexing the morphological dependence of the cleft pronoun on the cognitive status of the cleft clause:

(12)



In Chapters 5 and 6, the discussion shifts to the discourse function of clefts. Examples are drawn from a corpus of 700 tokens of cleft sentences from a variety of spoken and written discourse genres. Chapter 5 examines ‘topic-clause’ clefts, which exhibit prosodic prominence only on the clefted constituent:

- (13) JM: I want to ask this question: Why is this agreement so bad? I ask you.
 JG: Because our whole intention was to bring some form of democracy there; our intention was to make the Sandinistas cry uncle. **It is the contras who have cried uncle.** [McLaughlin Group-3/25/88]

The consistently activated status of the cleft-clause in such clefts supports the conclusion of Gundel 1985 that sentence-final topics generally are necessarily activated. The possibility of entirely omitting the cleft clause when the denoted topic is not only activated but already in the focus of the addressee’s attention gives rise to the class of ‘truncated clefts.’

- (14) Haven't you been wondering who the dickens put them in that watermelon? Of course you have; but you might have known **it was Janet**, because no one else would have done it.
[Rex Stout, *The Hand in the Glove*, p. 271]

I also show that a cleft clause frequently expresses information which is not directly activated but is judged to be easily accessible to the addressee through predictable patterns of inference. Such 'indirectly activated' cleft clauses exhibit secondary, topic accent or are left unaccented:

- (15) Beginning at the top of the list, I went along the landing and tapped at Ruskin's door. **When it was opened, it was Webber who stood there.** We stared at each other for a moment, both of us taken aback.
[Lucille Kallen, *The Piano Bird*, p. 95]
- (16) Eggs go up ten cents a dozen and they act like **it's us that raised 'em.**
[Studs Terkel, *Working*, p. 548, *Neighborhood Merchants*]

The peculiar nature of negation in clefts is also examined. Negation is found to have narrow scope over only the clefted constituent, and also has the character of metalinguistic negation (Horn 1985):

- (17) **It's not California but all society that weighs risks unevenly.**
[editorial, *The New York Times*, 10/22/89]

Rectification is found to be nearly always explicit in clefts, and to fit one of four basic patterns, exemplified in (17) and (18):

- (18) JM: Because the situation is in dire shape.
MK: But **it's not the kontras that are making it dire shape.**
JM: Right.
MK: **It's their own regime.**
[McLaughlin Group]

Finally, a class of *it*-subject copular sentences containing a sentential complement but lacking a cleft clause is examined and assigned the label 'sentential-focus clefts' on the basis of pragmatic similarities shared with full clefts:

- (19) **It isn't that it's unstable. It's just that it's warped.**
[Store owner to employee, pointing at a display beam, 10/89]

In Chapter 6, the discussion turns to 'comment-clause' clefts, which exhibit primary accent on the cleft clause instead of the clefted constituent, as in (20):

- (20) And of course, we've only got his version of the niece and the nurse —and he obviously had what the Scotch call ta'en a scunner at the nurse. We mustn't lose sight of her, by the way. She was the last person to be with the old lady before her death, and **it was she who administered that injection.**'

‘Yes, yes—but the injection had nothing to do with it. If anything’s clear, that is.’ [Sayers, 1927, *Unnatural Death*, p. 17]

The well known distinction of Prince 1978 between ‘stressed focus’ and ‘informative presupposition’ clefts is criticized on the grounds that familiar but unactivated cleft clauses receive primary sentence accent but cannot be characterized as ‘informative.’

It is hypothesized that comment-clause clefts are used to answer multiple *wh*-questions. Thus, the cleft in (21) answers the double question, ‘who did what?’, and the cleft in (22) answers the double ‘reclamatory’ question (Bolinger 1989), ‘who owes whom money?’.

- (21) It was the President, in a rare departure from the diplomacy of caution, who initiated the successful Panama invasion **It was also Bush who came up with the ideas of having an early, informal Malta summit with Gorbachev and a second round of troop cuts in Europe after the fall of the Berlin wall.**

[M. Dowd and T.L. Friedman, *The fabulous Bush and Baker Boys*, *The New York Times Magazine*, 5/6/90, p. 64]

- (22) MA: You all owe me money.
 NH: Oh. I told everyone that they owed DUANE money.
 MA: **It’s Duane who owes ME money.**
 [conversation, 11/86]

Comment-clause clefts of the ‘emphatic continuation’ type, such as (21), maintain the focus of attention on the referent of the clefted constituent, while ‘vice-versa’ clefts, such as (22), reverse the roles of two constituents of an activated proposition.

Comment-clause clefts can also be used to attract the attention of the addressee to the information in the cleft clause, as a device for signalling the beginning or end of a discourse segment.

- (23) [BEGINNING A NEWS REPORT] **It was less than a week ago that U.S. troops in Panama surrounded the Vatican embassy.** Shades of déjà vu — U.S. troops are once again surrounding a Latin American embassy, this time in Peru. [Public radio announcer, WSKG, 1/8/90]

- (24) With this, then, we have covered all the properties of NP sentence-topics which were discussed in the previous sections... Nevertheless, these are, obviously, not the only conditions, and applied to the actual discourse, they will not always identify the topic correctly. **It is within the area of specifying the conditions on the selection function that much empirical work is still needed.** [END OF ARTICLE]

[Reinhart 1981]

The hypothesis that comment-clause clefts provide answers to multiple questions suggests that the restriction of comment-clause clefts to subject NP’s and sentential adverbials (Prince 1978) should be analyzed as an instance of the ‘superiority’ constraint characteristic of multiple questions in general:

- (25) a. Who did what?
b. *What did who do?

The quasi-topical nature of the initial clefted constituent also follows from the multiple-focus analysis, given the assumption that the clefted constituent expresses the 'sorting key' of the answer in the sense of Kuno 1982, as does the fronted *wh*-word of a multiple question. The overall function of clefts in general, then, is simply to highlight the answer to a relevant question.