

DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS OF CLEFT SENTENCES IN ENGLISH

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Cleft sentences contain what is called *presupposition*, the content of which can never be influenced by negative transformation. Incidentally, what we should take special note of is the relationships between presupposition and its informational status. Although presupposition is often identified with the notion *given*, it is not always to be so. It should be kept in mind that the former is a logico-semantic notion; on the other hand, the latter is a discourse notion, as indicated by Prince (1978:887, 898). In this paper, it is proposed that *it*-clefts and inverted *wh*-clefts have three identical types of informational structure, while non-inverted *wh*-clefts (hereafter indicated as *wh*-clefts) have only one type. Meanwhile, the relationship between the informational structure and the thematic structure is shown at the same time. Furthermore, through the examination of the three types of clefts with reference to different examples from various texts, three chief discourse functions are proposed: 1. the function of topic-continuity, 2. the function of introducing new information, 3. the function of setting the scene.*

1. Introduction

The word *cleft* was introduced by Jespersen (*cf.* 1937:25.4-25.9). That is, by using "it is," we *cleave* a sentence into presupposition and focus. For example:

- (1) I wanted to ignore his callousness.
 (2) It was his callousness that I wanted to ignore.

FOCUS PRESUPPOSITION

The next sentence also cleaves itself into the two parts in question. It is called *wh*-clefts or pseudo-clefts.

their definition of Theme / Rheme (for details, see Fukuda 1986). Davidse (1987:64) quotes the definition of Theme which was introduced for the first time by the Prague school linguist V. Mathesius (1939) "O tak zvaném aktuálním členění větném" (On the So-Called Functional Sentence Perspective). The same quotation is seen in Firbas (1964:267):

- (6) that which is known or at least obvious in the given situation and from which the speaker proceeds

Davidse (1987:64-72) points out that there are two different ideas packed together in this definition. The first half involves the status of Givenness, the latter half that of the starting point of a sentence. Furthermore, she distinguishes the two currently competing definitions of Theme / Rheme as *Combining Approach* and *Separatist Approach* according to the way to deal with the two statuses involved in (6). She includes Firbas' approach in the former and Halliday's in the latter. Halliday's definition follows:

- (7) The Theme is the element which serves *as the point of departure of the message*; it is that with which the clause is concerned. The remainder of the message, the part in which the Theme is developed, is called in Prague school terminology the Rheme. (Halliday 1985:38)

Halliday separates his Theme, as the starting point of the message, from the notion of Givenness. What is characteristic of Halliday is that he regards Theme as the *meaning* realized by an element rather than the element itself. This idea leads him to the distinction of various kinds of Themes, textual, interpersonal, and ideational (or topical). Firbas' definition is different:

- (8) Theme: the elements carrying the lowest degrees of CD
Rheme: the elements carrying the highest degrees of CD

(Firbas 1964:272, 1966:240)

CD or Communicative Dynamism is "the extent to which the sentence element contributes the development of the communication, to which it 'pushes the communication forward', as it were" (*cf.* Firbas 1964:270). It can be approximately reworded as the *informational value* of sentence elements. As Davidse states, Firbas takes the Combining Approach with respect to deciding the degree of CD. He insists that the degree of CD should be decided

through the interplay of three factors: grammatical, semantic, and contextual. If so, I think that he should add two more factors: intonation and pragmatic knowledge about the differences of the informational weight among sentence elements because without them Firbas could not explain the difference of the next pair of examples:

(9) A WASP has settled on you.

(10) A wasp has settled on your BACK. (Quirk *et al.* 1985:18.13)

In (9) and (10), the two elements in capital letters have nuclear stress and the highest degree of CD respectively. In Firbas' framework, "A wasp" in (9) and (10) would both be Rheme proper, but how could he explain the difference in intonation? This difficulty in deciding the degree of CD comes from his approach which closely relates Theme with Given and Rheme with New. Therefore, in Firbas' approach, I feel that a more precise way of computing the degree of CD should be established in order for the notion of Theme/Rheme to be more workable in the analysis of the communicative aspect of language.

2.1. The thematic structure of clefts

Let us again consider (2) and (3) to show how Firbas and Halliday analyze the thematic structure of clefts. First, Firbas:

(11) It was his callousness that I wanted to ignore. (= 2)

Th Tr Rh Th

(*cf.* Firbas 1975:330)

CD(Th) < CD(Tr) < CD(Rh)

(Tr=Transition)

In my interpretation "It" as Theme has a very low degree of CD because its role is only to indicate the starting point of *it*-clefts grammatically. "It," furthermore, is essentially a cataphoric pronoun which is co-referential with the *that*-clause which comes later in the sentence. "His callousness" is selected as the focus to be contrasted with the possible candidates which have not been chosen, so it has the highest degree of CD. The copula "was" is a transitional element with the medium degree of CD, which has the function of identification of the focal element as well as the indication of tense. As

This is quite similar to Firbas' analysis of (12) except for omitting Firbas' notion of Transition. Although there is some disagreement in the analysis of the thematic structure of *it*-clefts, there seems to be no problem in the case of *wh*-clefts. Let us consider the case of inverted *wh*-clefts:

(15) That is what I want to say.

Th Rh

(15) is identical with all the instances of (11)-(14) in that they all have the same thematic order, that is Theme to Rheme. Consider the next example:

(16) You see what you did? You dropped out of school, you gave up an education because of a clump, which as far as I know was practically non-existent! A little physical defect is what you have.** Hardly noticeable even! Magnified thousands of times by imagination!

(T. Williams: *The Glass Menagerie*:100)

Especially with this example, will there be disagreement between Firbas and Halliday. Firbas would call "A little physical defect" Rheme. Halliday and Allerton (1978) as well would call it Theme or New Theme. In Firbas' framework, there does not exist the notion New Theme unless the sentence in question is context-free. In this paper, I will adopt Halliday's view for the sake of explanatory convenience. I hypothesize that (16) is Theme + Rheme, just as (15) is.

Chafe (1976) sets aside the term Theme/Rheme. Instead, he seems to try to cover the notion with his concepts of *subject*, *topic*, and *contrast*. He states that the function of subject is "what we are talking about," which is very much like Halliday's Theme. To Chafe, the topic is "Premature Subjects." I think that Chafe's Subject and Halliday's Theme as defined this way should be put in the category of Topic. Topic is, in my interpretation, something that is talked about in a sentence or a discourse. I hypothesize that Theme is the sentence-initial element which decides how to package the message. We should pay attention to the relationship of the thematic structure of clefts with their informational structure.

3. Given / New — Definition

First, it is necessary to clarify what the Given / New is. What is most important to note is that, as stated by Chafe (1976:32), the status is *speaker-oriented*, not *listener-oriented*. For example:

- (17) I saw your father yesterday.

“Your father” in (17) is new information and rhematic, to borrow Firbas’ term, with the highest pitch and strongest stress because the speaker newly introduces this item into the consciousness of the listener, although it is quite natural for the listener to know his or her father. Thus, Given / New is entirely based on the assumption of the speaker. In that sense it is more or less *subjective*, not *objective* as is often believed by some linguists. As a result, it could happen that the assumed Given is, in fact, New for the listener or *vice versa*. This way of understanding Given / New will be found to be indispensable in analyzing the informational structure of cleft sentences. In this paper, I will work with the following definition based on Chafe (1976) and Prince (1978), who essentially takes over Chafe’s idea with a slight revision:

- (18) NEW INFORMATION: Information which the speaker assumes he is introducing into the hearer’s consciousness by what he says

(cf. Chafe 1976:30)

- (19) GIVEN INFORMATION: Information which the coöperative speaker may assume is appropriately in the hearer’s consciousness

(Prince 1978:903)

- (20) KNOWN INFORMATION: Information which the speaker represents as being factual and as already known to certain persons (often not including the hearer)

(Prince 1978:903)

It is to be noted that Prince (1978) makes a threefold distinction of the informational status; Chafe (1976) has a twofold distinction. Especially (20) does have crucial relevance to the study of clefts. Although Prince (1981) proposes seven types of Assumed Familiarity, here I will follow these three types to avoid complexity. A detailed study of the

ways to define informational status will be reviewed in a future paper.

3.1. The informational structure of clefts

Let us analyze the informational structure of clefts in the following way. The thematic structure, the essential framework of which was discussed in section 2, is indicated at the same time. The indication of Transition is omitted to make the representation simple:

(21) It is FOCUS that PRESUPPOSITION (*It*-clefts)

(Th) (Rh)

- a. GIVEN KNOWN (perhaps NEW to hearer)¹⁾
- b. NEW GIVEN
- c. NEW KNOWN (perhaps NEW to hearer)

(22) Wh PRESUPPOSITION is FOCUS (*Wh*-clefts)

(Th) (Rh)

GIVEN NEW

(23) FOCUS is wh PRESUPPOSITION (Inverted *Wh*-clefts)

(Th) (Rh)

- a. GIVEN KNOWN (perhaps NEW to hearer)
- b. NEW GIVEN
- c. NEW KNOWN (perhaps NEW to hearer)

3.1.1. (21)a is exemplified by the next sentence:

(24) However, it turns out that there is rather interesting independent evidence for this rule, and it is to that evidence that we must now turn. (Declerck 1984:277)

This is the example which Declerck (1984) calls “Unstressed-Anaphoric-Focus Clefts” (UAF clefts). “Evidence” in (24) indeed has higher CD than “it” in that it is chosen as a (more or less contrastive) focus from among a limited number of possible candidates, as Chafe (1976) points out, despite the fact that it is a textually anaphoric element, but it is very difficult to say that the CD of “evidence” is higher than the CD of the presupposition.

As for the concept of *contrast*, there is no room to discuss it in detail here. I would merely follow Chafe's idea that all the foci of clefts are more or less contrastive in that they are chosen from among possible candidates. Prince (1978) states that the presupposition as in (24) is *known*, where the speaker presents something perhaps New to the listener as if Known, namely as if a presupposed fact. This is a very important point, as will be discussed again in 3.1.3. Although the thematic structure is just one type, we should notice that the informational structure has various types of combinations, such as (21)a, b and c.

3.1.2. (21)b is typically exemplified by the next cleft:

- (25) Nobody knows who killed the old man. The police seem to believe that it was a tramp who did it. (Declerck 1984:264)

This applies quite well to the structure of FOCUS (Theme, New) + PRESUPPOSITION (Rheme, Given). The CD of "who did it" is so low that it can be deleted. Even if deleted, the sentence can be communicative enough, so I include a truncated type in the category of *it*-clefts, as Bolinger (1972) does. Those linguists who directly relate the presupposition of clefts with the status *given* see only a (21)b type as in (25) and not the (21)a, c types. (25) is what Declerck (1984) calls "Contrastive Clefts" and what Prince (1978) calls "Stressed-Focus *It*-Clefts" (SF *it*-clefts).

3.1.3. Let us examine the (21)c type. This includes *some* of Prince's "Informative-Presupposition *It*-Clefts" (IP *it*-clefts). A typical example follows:

- (26) ## It was just about 50 years ago that Henry Ford gave us the weekend. On September 25, 1926, in a somewhat shocking move for that time, he decided to establish a 40-hour work week, giving his employees two days off instead of one. (Prince 1978:898)

(## means a discourse-opener)

According to Prince, the main function of IP *it*-clefts is "to mark a piece of information as fact, known to some people although not yet known to the intended hearer." This is a strong rhetorical temptation on the part of the speaker to present new information as

if known. The sub-functions she shows of this type are: 1. to give a sense of news, 2. to function like a subordinate clause for the preceding sentence, 3. to show deference/politeness or self-effacement. And she states these are three features of IP *it*-clefts: 1. *that*-clause is normally stressed, 2. focus is short and anaphoric, 3. *that/wh*-clause is not deletable (Prince 1978:899, 902). In its presupposition part, an IP *it*-cleft expresses a fact as if known to everybody, except possibly the hearer. Prince classifies this kind of presupposition as Known. Compare (21)a with (21)c. The feature of the former is an unstressed, short, and anaphoric focus, while that of the latter is a relatively stressed focus carrying new information (*cf.* Declerck 1984:263-4). The question is whether we should take temporal adverbial phrases like “just about 50 years ago” in (26) as new information or not. I think that anaphoric expressions like “at that time” are Given without a contrastive stress, but that non-anaphoric adverbials like “just about 50 years ago” should be taken as New. Thus (26) falls into my classification (21)c, namely, the structure FOCUS (Theme, New) + PRESUPPOSITION (Rheme, Known). As in (21)a, it is difficult to decide which element has a higher degree of CD, focus or presupposition. The presupposition part of this type as well as (21)a tends to be rather long. This is because the speaker is tempted to represent a fact which is perhaps New to the hearer as if Known, and for that purpose *it*-clefts are quite suitable as they have an open-ended *that*-clause unlike *wh*-clefts. Consider another example of (21)c:

- (27) ## I think it was on the third day that a telegram signed Henry C. Gatz arrived from a town in Minnesota. It said only that the sender was leaving immediately and to postpone the funeral until he came. (F. S. Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*:158, Section-initial)

3.1.4. The informational structure of *wh*-clefts is only one type, as Prince suggests. Thus I pose (22), that is, PRESUPPOSITION (Theme, Given) + FOCUS (Rheme, New). Concerning this type, Prince gives the following example:

- (28) ## What we have set as our goal is the grammatical capacity of children — a part of their linguistic competence. (Prince 1978:888)

This is a discourse-opener of some linguistic article. Why is it possible to use a *wh*-cleft as a discourse-opener despite its presupposition being Given? The reason for the appro-

priateness is that the authors *can assume* that their readers can be conscious that some goal has been set concerning the article in question. This assumability allows the use of *wh*-clefts at the initial position of the discourse. Consider another example:

(29) ## What we're going to look at today (this term) is ...

(Prince 1978:889)

This is uttered by a professor in the classroom at the beginning of his (or her) lecture. It is again assumable for the professor that the students are conscious of his or her giving a lecture about some particular academic topic "today" or "this term." We should remember that this assumability guarantees *givenness* as seen above. Without this assumability, the discourse-initial use of *wh*-clefts causes a breakdown in the act of communication, resulting in too much presumptuousness on the part of the speaker. For example:

(30)a. ##* Hi! What my name is is Ellen.

b. ##* Hi! What I've heard about is your work.

c. ##* Hi! What you used to do was go to school with my brother.

(Prince 1978:888)

Although *some* IP *it*-clefts or *some* of Declerck's "Discontinuous Clefts" can become discourse-openers rather freely, why does such restriction exist about *wh*-clefts? That is because *some it*-clefts have the scene-setting function to be discussed later, while *wh*-clefts do not, and the *wh*-clause of *wh*-clefts is identical with *wh*-questions with respect to the content of presupposition, as mentioned in Fukuchi (1985:140). Consider (30)a. The underlying *wh*-question is "What is my name?" and the presupposition is "My name is X." It is usually non-sensical to utter this kind of *wh*-question, especially discourse-initially, because at the moment of the utterance the speaker cannot assume that the listener is concerned with her name "Ellen." Incidentally, Declerck (1984:256-7) criticizes Prince that even if *it*-clefts are used instead of *wh*-clefts in the context of (30)a, b and c, they will all be inappropriate, so this restriction does not only apply to *wh*-clefts but also to *it*-clefts. As far as this context is concerned, he is right. I think that most of the discourse-initial Discontinuous clefts are IP *it*-clefts with a scene-setting function.

3.1.5. As for the informational structure of inverted *wh*-clefts (23), note that each of the three types corresponds exactly to that of (21). Look at the next example:

- (31)a. But why is the topic so important? Apparently, it is the topic that enables the listener to compute the intended antecedents of each sentence in the paragraph.
- b. (...) Apparently, the topic is what enables the listener to compute the intended antecedents of each sentence ...

(Declerck 1984:259)

(31)a is Declerck's UAF cleft and Prince's IP *it*-cleft, which can be easily paraphrased by the inverted *wh*-cleft (31)b. This shows that *it*-clefts and inverted *wh*-clefts are quite similar in their functions in discourse. FOCUS (Theme, Given) + PRESUPPOSITION (Rheme, Known) is realized in (31)b as well as (31)a. Another example:

- (32) However, it turns out that there is rather interesting independent evidence for this rule, and that evidence is what we must now turn to. (Declerck 1984:277) (*cf.* 24 above)

Note that "the topic" in (31)b and "that evidence" in (32) are both anaphoric and function as the Theme in either Firbas' or Halliday's sense. So for them the sentence-initial position is most natural or unmarked. For both cases, *wh*-clefts cannot be used because they will break the discourse-topic-first principle, as will be discussed later. Prince uses the notion Informative Presupposition for some *it*-clefts only, but that is because she excludes inverted *wh*-clefts from the scope of her study (1978). The notion applies to inverted *wh*-clefts as well as *it*-clefts because a postponed *wh*-clause is open-ended just as a *that*-clause of *it*-clefts. (15) above also falls into this type. Consider the (23)b type, FOCUS (Theme, New) + PRESUPPOSITION (Rheme, Given):

- (33) "Who broke that window?" "John was the one who did it."

(Declerck 1984:265)

Compare (33) with (25). They are both called Contrastive clefts by Declerck (1984). The

focus has the highest degree of CD, and the CD of the presupposition is so low that it is deletable. Even if in (33), “was the one who did it” is deleted, only “John” will be a communicable answer to the preceding question. That is the case with (25). Next is the type in (23)c, FOCUS (Theme, New) + PRESUPPOSITION (Rheme, Known):

(34) ## Discourse Analysis is what we're going to look at this term.

Compare (34) with (29). In (29) the fronted presupposition, “What we're going to look at ...,” is classified as Given by following Prince (1978), thus Given + New. However, in (34) the postponed presupposition seems to have a higher CD than in the fronted case. So it is classified as Known, not Given. If it were Given as in (33), then it would be deletable, but actually it is not in (34). (23)c includes (16) as well as (34). I predict (34) is less natural than (29), especially as a discourse-opener, because it has a marked informational order of New-first.

4. Taxonomy of clefts

In my discussion so far, I have mentioned the kinds of clefts and their names given by Prince (1978) and Declerck (1984). For the purpose of summary, their taxonomy of clefts is considered again. First, Prince's three kinds of clefts:

- (35)a. *wh*-clefts: GIVEN PRESUPPOSITION (Inverted *wh*-clefts excluded from the scope of the study)
- b. Stressed-Focus *it*-clefts (SF *it*-clefts)
- c. Informative-Presupposition *it*-clefts (IP *it*-clefts)

On the other hand, Declerck's three kinds of clefts cover all of the *it*-clefts, *wh*-clefts and Inverted *wh*-clefts. In this sense, his classification is more comprehensive:

- (36)a. Contrastive Clefts
- b. Unstressed-Anaphoric-Focus clefts (UAF clefts)
- c. Discontinuous Clefts

As for (35)a, the givenness of the presupposition is attached by the preceding text or the situation:

(37) "What do you need?" "What I need is a sheet of paper and a pencil."

(Declerck 1984:265)

In (37) the presupposition of the second sentence merely repeats the preceding question. Therefore, its givenness is quite obvious. Such a case seems to be rather rare. For "situationally Given," look at (28) and (29). Note that "situationally Given" is often misunderstood as New because it might be difficult to be identified precisely, unlike "textually Given." (37) is classified as Contrastive clefts by Declerck (Focus is contrastive). Declerck states the next *wh*-cleft is Discontinuous unlike Prince's view:

(38) ## My dear friends, what we have always wanted to know, but what the government has never wanted to tell us, is what exactly happens at a secret conference like the one you have been reading about in the papers this week.

There is one man, however, ...

(Declerck:1984:263)

Indeed, the CD of the presupposition appears to be high, but the informational content of the part is conveyed by the speaker in the manner that it can be assumed to exist in the listener's consciousness. Therefore, I agree with Prince's view that the presupposition of *wh*-clefts should be always Given. Prince's (35)b is almost identical with Declerck's (36)a. For a typical example, see (25). However, the term "contrastive" is somewhat misleading because the focus of all types of clefts is contrastive more or less. According to Chafe (1976), the status "contrast" is distinguished from that of Given/New. The capitalized parts of the following sentences are all contrastive, a different notion from New, he says:

- (39)a. RONALD made the hamburgers. (contrast by means of intonation)
 b. It was RONALD who made the hamburgers.
 c. The one who made the hamburgers was RONALD.
 d. JOHN I saw.
 e. The PLAY, John saw YESTERDAY. (double contrast)

f. As for the PLAY, John saw it YESTERDAY. (double contrast)

(Chafe 1976:37,49)

(39)b, c are clefts which fit the purpose of dividing a sentence into focus and presupposition as discussed above. I would take the focus of the two clefts as New or more precisely “contrastively New” because contrastive stress can rhematize the elements upon which it falls, whether they are New or Given in the informational status which is based on the speaker’s assumability of the listener’s consciousness. As for (39)d, e, f, they are all so-called topicalization, though Chafe refuses to label them that way.

Another interesting point is that Declerck distinguishes Prince’s (35)c into two types: (36)b and (36)c. For the former, see (15), (24), (31)a, b, (32). For the latter, see (26) and (27). It seems that Declerck’s (36)c is significant in analyzing some of the *it*-clefts which have the scene-setting function.

5. Discourse functions of clefts

I propose three chief discourse functions of clefts: 1. the function of Topic-continuity, 2. the function of introducing New-element (s), and 3. the function of setting the scene (Time and Place). Concerning the first function, Declerck (1984:274) states:

(40) The principal factor playing a role in the choice of a particular type of cleft probably has to do with the thematic organization of the sentence and of the discourse of which it forms part.

Note that he distinguishes between the sentence-theme (or sentence-topic) and the discourse-theme (or discourse-topic). He continues to say that the decisive factor is the tendency to process a continuous topic as the first element of a sentence (*i.e.* as the focus of an *it*-cleft or as the subject part of either an inverted or non-inverted *wh*-cleft). Consider the next example (*cf.* Prince 1978:902 and Declerck 1984:274-5):

(41) However, it turns out that there is rather interesting independent evidence for this rule, and it is to that evidence that we must now turn. (=24)
(UAF cleft)

The underlined *it*-cleft in (41) has an anaphoric focus “that evidence,” and it precedes the presupposition part. This fact goes along quite well with the principle of Continuous-Topic-First. The next sentences conform to the principle if they are used instead of the *it*-cleft in (41):

- (42)a. ... and that evidence is what we must now turn to. (Inverted *wh*-cleft) (=32)
 b. ... and that evidence we must now turn to. (Topicalization)
 c. ... and that evidence must now be turned to. (Passive)

On the other hand, the next examples are less natural in terms of Topic-continuity in the context of (41):

- (43)a. ... and what we must now turn to is that evidence. (*wh*-cleft)
 b. ... and we must now turn to that evidence. (Non-cleft)

The order of the anaphoric focus coming later and the part which ought to have a higher CD coming first, causes the awkwardness of (43)a and b. By the way, Declerck calls “evidence” in the first half of the coordinated sentence in (41) “Primary Topic.” His “sentence topic” seems to be similar to Halliday’s Theme in that it is defined by the fact that it is at the initial position of the sentence, though it is difficult for me to understand precisely how Declerck distinguishes between Theme and Topic. I would interpret his Primary Topic as a preceding dominant Topic, be it New or Given, which could be called a discourse Topic, and his Continuous Topic as an Anaphoric Topic, which continues the Primary Topic. I will use the term D-Topic for Discontinuous Topic², C-Topic for Continuous Topic. My position is to make a clear distinction between the notion Theme and the notion Topic. I hypothesize in this paper that Theme is the element at the initial position of a sentence which decides how to package the message and that, on the other hand, Topic should be interpreted as *every* kind of Noun Phrase in a sentence and its semantic equivalents which act as the arguments of the verb. Therefore, Topic can also be, like Theme, either New or Given. Note the following two examples which break the natural Topic-continuity line (*cf.* Declerck 1984:275-6):

- (44)a. Have you found everything you need? Well, I’ve found the handbooks but it’s the dictionary that I haven’t found.

- b. Have you found everything you need? Well, I've found the handbooks but the dictionary is what I haven't found.

For (44), *wh*-cleft, "what I haven't found is the dictionary" is the most natural sentence.

5.1. Examples of the function of Topic-continuity

With what I have so far discussed, let me offer the examples of Topic-continuity:

- (45) ¹One of the taxi drivers in the village never took a fare past
 Th Rh
 New
 D-Topic
the entrance gate without stopping for a minute and pointing inside; ²perhaps
it was he who drove Daisy and Gatsby over to East
 Th Rh
 Given (as if) Known
 C-Topic
Egg the night of the accident, ³and perhaps he had made a story
 Th Rh
 Given
 C-Topic
about it all his own. (F. S. Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*:133)

In the first sentence of (45), the part "One of the taxi drivers" is newly introduced. There are other possible topics either with New or Given status, like "the village," "a fare," "the entrance gate," "stopping," and "pointing." Nevertheless, "One of the taxi drivers" is given the highest prominence as Topic because of the sentence-initial position or subject-position. "One of the taxi drivers" is continued by "he" in the focal position of the second sentence, another instance of Declerck's UAF clefts. It is continued by "he" in the subject position of the third sentence. The *it*-cleft in the second sentence could be easily paraphrased by the inverted *wh*-cleft "perhaps he was the one who drove ...," but not by a *wh*-cleft.

The next example shows a more interesting flow of Topic-continuity:

Given	Known
C-Topic	C-Topic

you are going to use it for.” (W. Faulkner: “A Rose for Emily”:15)

Note the relation between number 3 and 4. Number 3 consists of the presupposition and the equative copula “is,” and the content of the presupposition is “you want X poison” which comes from sentence 1, “I want some poison.” Therefore, until number 3, the discourse-Topic is “I (or you) want X poison.” In this way Topic can sometimes take the form of proposition, not just a single NP. And what is interesting is that the focus of number 3 *wh*-cleft “arsenic” is given by the druggist’s interlocutor Miss Emily, and thereafter to the end of the discourse, the discourse-Topic is kept to be “arsenic.” A Topic-change has occurred here. It seems two factors govern the flow of Topic. One is the continuation of Topic, and the other is Topic-switching, though it is not clear whether some general rule exists to control these two factors. All that can be said here is that newly chosen focal elements are generally rather easy to become the next new C-Topic, as seen above in the case of “arsenic.” To this case, Firbas’ notion of Rheme Proper is most well applied, as it is supposed to have the highest degree of CD to push forward the communication.

5.2. The function of introducing the New element first

It seems to be most natural to introduce a New item following a Given item, as seen in “What you want (Given) is arsenic (New)” in (46). This is an unmarked order of informational flow. This principle seems to be more dominant in the languages which have more freedom in word-order. However, in English, which has a more fixed word order, it is not so rare that sentences form a marked informational structure of New to Given or New to Known. Thus we have some cleft sentences in which an important New focus is fronted, with low-CD presupposition attached afterwards or often truncated (*cf.* Leech & Svartvik 1975:176). By New focus, I mean both Purely New and Contrastively New in the same category. Consider the following example:

- (47) Whenever we talked about the dream Harry always said it was as bad as ever. He said the fact that he continued having the recurrent dream was what was bad; the dream itself, however, was very pleasant. (E. Caldwell: “The Dream”:24)

The postponed presupposition “what was bad” has a rather low CD. I have classified it as Known. Therefore, the inverted *wh*-cleft in (47) falls in the structure New + Known, just as “A little physical defect is what you have” in (16). Another example:

- (48) “Hold on, Jim,” I told him. “It’s their house they’re moving into. God-helping, they’re not moving into your and Jim’s house, are they, Mrs. Frost?”
(E. Caldwell: “Country Full of Swedes”:59)

The focus is more clearly contrastively New than the one in (47), just as in “a tramp” in (25). The CD of the presupposition is very low. In (48) the Givenness of the presupposition is situational. In this way, in English, it is possible for the speaker to introduce the New element first, in which sense we can find some similarity in the next example, which is classified as a sentence of *appearance* by Firbas (1966:241-3):

- (49) Then a strange voice in the tower spoke to her thus: “You foolish girl! Are you such a coward that you want to end your young life in such a stupid way? (J. Kirkup: *The Glory That Was Greece*:70)

As for many of the *it*-clefts with this function, the degree of CD of their presupposition is so low that it is sometimes deleted. If deleted, the presupposition can be taken as *hyper-Given*. Usually the deleted presupposition *that*-clause can be recovered textually or situationally.⁹ Consider the following two examples of Truncated *it*-clefts:

- (50) It was raining harder. A man in a rubber cape was crossing the empty square to the café. The cat would be around to the right. Perhaps she could go along under the eaves. As she stood in the doorway an umbrella opened behind her. It was the maid who looked after their room. (E. Hemingway: “Cat in the Rain”:14-15)

To read carefully, we will find that the presupposition “that did it for her” is deleted at the end of the underlined sentence. This is a recovery from the preceding text. This way of recovery seems to be the most common. However, there is a situation where it is a little more difficult to make such a recovery from the preceding text:

- (51) He then emptied the whole bottle into the farmer's mouth. Sigurd sat up shakily and then stood upright in the coffin. He could hardly believe that he was alive again. Climbing out of the grave, he breathed the cool night air. Later he could not recall if it was the fumes from the bottle or his own weakened state — but he came to his senses to find himself sitting beside a wood fire in a dark forest far from his former home. (Wil Huygen: *Gnome*: 8, English translation by J. Lynch & R. Eisenstein)

Here the deleted presupposition can be thought to be “that made him fall asleep” or “that made him unaware of his action” or something like that. And the clue of this recovery is not found in the preceding text but in the following sentence, namely, “but he came to his senses to find ...”

5.3. The function of setting the scene.

This function is specially related with some of Prince's IP *it*-clefts, that is, some of Declerck's UAF *it*-clefts and Discontinuous *it*-clefts. It should be noted that although Function 1 and Function 2 clearly contradict each other, it seems function 3 does not necessarily conflict with 1 and 2. I think of two kinds of scenes. One is temporal, the other locational. For the former, see (26) and (27). Other examples follow:

- (52) I left her house, as I had so often left it that vanished June, in a mood of vague dissatisfaction. It was hours later, tossing about my bed in the hotel, that I realized what was the matter, what had always been the matter — I was deeply and incurably in love with her. In spite of every incompatibility, she was still, she would always be to me, the most attractive girl I had ever known. (F. S. Fitzgerald: “The Last of the Belles”:60-1)
- (53) ## It was when curiosity about Gatsby was at its highest that the lights in his house failed to go on one Saturday night — and, as obscurely as it had begun, his career as Trimalchio was over. (F. S. Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*: 108, Chapter-initial)

In all the cases of (26), (27), (52), and (53), the Temporal focus has the status New and the presupposition is conspicuously informative, as shown by Prince in her discussion of

IP *it*-clefts. All these cases fall into the category of Declerck's Discontinuous clefts in which both focus and presupposition are discontinuous to the preceding context. Such discontinuousness is illustrated by the fact that (26), (27), and (53) are used discourse-initially. The function of focus here is to give the Temporal scene to the informative presupposition following. This I would call the function of setting the scene. This type of cleft *partly* overlaps those shown in Function 1 in that both can have the informative presupposition; on the other hand, they *partly* overlap those shown in Function 2 in that both can have New focus. Further, note that the focus with Function 3 is not necessarily New but can be Given. If the Temporal focus is given, then that cleft has Function 1 and Function 3 at the same time. The next example shows the focus is Given, the presupposition informative:

- (54) It was also during these centuries that a vast internal migration (...) from the south northwards took place, a process no less momentous than the Amhara expansion southwards during the last part of the 19th century. (Prince 1978: 898)

Next is an example of locational focus with the status Given. Thus the sentence has Function 1 and 3 combined:

- (55) The mood-subject may be said to constitute an 'empty' or 'dummy' theme, since it has no referential function (...). It is here that we see the most obvious conflict between the formal notion of theme as a textual element and the pretheoretical notion of theme as 'what we are talking about'.

(J. Taglicht 1984: *Message and Emphasis*:18)

6. Conclusion

In order to clarify the discourse-functions of clefts, I have analyzed their thematic structure and informational structure, and discussed the topic-continuity. Further, I have shown the interrelationships of the three. I have set up three kinds of informational structures for *it*-clefts (see 21), three identical structures for inverted *wh*-clefts (see 23), and a single structure for *wh*-clefts (see 22).

The convergence of the three categories (Theme, Given, and C-Topic) is most unmarked, illustrating Topic-continuity and also controlling the use of clefts. However, it is not an absolute, single factor in affecting the use of clefts. Some *it*-clefts and some inverted *wh*-clefts can introduce New element(s) or D-Topic first, though *wh*-clefts cannot. Through this observation I have proposed two kinds of discourse-functions of clefts: 1. the function of Topic-continuity, and 2. the function of introducing New element(s) first. Furthermore, I have proposed function 3, that is, the function of setting the scene. Note that function 1 has to do with all three types of clefts, whereas function 2 can be assumed only by *it*-clefts and inverted *wh*-clefts. These two are quite opposite in their functions. On the other hand, function 3 overlaps functions 1 and 2 and does not conflict with them. Function 3 has to do with *it*-clefts with an adverbial focus to indicate time or location. It cannot be assumed by *wh*-clefts, be they inverted or non-inverted.

In this paper I have adopted Halliday's notion of Theme/Rheme as a working hypothesis. However, I have not decided which is actually more workable in dealing with other linguistic phenomena than clefts, Halliday's approach or Firbas'. Besides, I have not mentioned the detail of the role of intonation in deciding the degree of CD or the status of Given/New. These are problems requiring future study.

* I read a paper with a similar title at the 24th annual convention of *Hyogen-Gakkai* (The Society of Expression-Formation Studies) held at Baika Women's University, Osaka, on May 24, 1987. This paper is based on it and has been developed and revised from it. The most important revision is that, as far as Theme/Rheme analysis is concerned, I have adopted Halliday's notion instead of Firbas' which I followed in the earlier version.

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** All the underlines in the quoted passages are by the author.

NOTE

1) The only case to which Firbas' theory of Theme/Rheme fails to apply is for an *it*-cleft as in (24). (24) might be analyzed in the following way, according to Firbas (1975):

a) it is to that evidence that we must now turn

Th Rh Th

This is derived from the idea that presupposition is inherently Given. However, it fails to indicate that the informative presupposition of (24) has a higher degree of CD, probably higher than that

of the anaphoric focus. Then can we make the following analysis, considering the difference of the degree of CD between the focus and the presupposition?

b) it is to that evidence that we must now turn

Th Th Rh

Again the structure "it(Th) is to that evidence(Th)" is very strange because there is no Rheme in it. That is why I have set aside Firbas' notion, for this paper. As for the other types of clefts, his analysis applies quite well. Thus, as his theory seems to involve a contradiction only in dealing with *it*-clefts of the (24) type, that is, the structure (21)a, I still think it may be possible to improve it in the future. For example, one possibility, to my mind, is the following analysis:

c) it is to that evidence that we must now turn

Th Rh¹ Rh²

CD(Th) < CD(Rh¹) < CD(Rh²)

This speculative analysis coincides with Firbas' "basic distribution of the degree of CD." Note the straight crescendo of the degree of CD from the beginning of the sentence to the end.

2) Discontinuous Topic can be roughly reworded as New Topic, Continuous Topic as Given Topic.

3) For a situational recovery, the next example is illustrative:

ex) [A knock on the door] Who is it?

What is thought to be deleted after the sentence is "that is standing at the door," "that has knocked," or something of this sort.

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