Chapter 7
Clefting in spoken languages

Introduction

The third part of this work focuses on a construction traditionally believed to be related to relative constructions, namely cleft structures. As for relativization, this section aims at providing a descriptive outline of the constitutive elements of clefts in the world’s languages, concentrating on the shared cross-linguistic features enabling the formulation of a general description of the structure crucial for the analysis of LIS clefts which is undertaken in chapter 8.

By looking at languages allowing the dropping of some constitutive features of clefts, such as the copula and the clefted pronoun, the subject of the copular clause, I shall look for some evidence of the core syntactic features of cleft constructions across languages.

While § 7.1 provides a general description of clefts, § 7.2 is a review of the main theories proposed in the literature to analyze the syntax of cleft constructions: the extraposition analysis and the expletive analysis. Section § 7.3 briefly illustrates recent cartographic approaches to the study of clefts (Rizzi 1997, 2004a, 2004b; Cinque and Rizzi 2008; Belletti 2008) and in § 7.4 clefts are compared to root left peripheral focalization. Finally, in § 7.5 clefts are presented in some pro-drop languages that, like LIS, display a null copula. The information gathered in this chapter is summarized in § 7.6.

7.1. Cleft constructions in the world’s languages: toward a definition

As in chapter 3 when trying to describe relative constructions, a first concern of this chapter is to provide a general definition of cleft constructions able to hold across languages and able, at the same time, to maintain a relatively atheoretical approach, i.e. to describe the relevant construction by remaining neutral as to the different analyses proposed in the literature to explain its syntax.

Before getting started, let us very quickly clarify some terms that will be employed henceforth: I shall use the term sentence to refer to the complex
construction composed of a matrix clause and of a dependent clause, and *clause* to refer to the smaller CP inside the complex sentence.

A common definition (Lambrecht 2001, a.o.) for a cleft construction is given in (469).

(469) A *cleft construction* consists of a sentence-initial matrix clause, the predicate of which is a copula, and a sentence-final relative clause, the relativized argument of which is co-indexed with the argument of the copula.

A cleft sentence is exemplified in (470).

(470) *It is a pizza that the woman ordered.*

The definition given in (469) seems, however, to be incorrect at least under three main respects:

a. it wrongly defines the sentence-initial clause as a matrix clause;
b. it assumes the sentence-final clause to be a relative clause, a claim which needs to be accounted for and on which there is no general agreement in the literature;
c. it imprecisely defines the relation between the argument of the copula and the so-called relativized argument of the sentence-final relative clause as co-indexation.

As for point a), we can notice that the definition in (469) might hold for the sentence in (470), the initial clause of which, extracted in (470a), can stand on its own as any matrix clause does. However, it does not seem to be a correct definition for the sentences in (471a) and (472a), the initial clauses of which cannot be uttered in isolation, as illustrated in (471b) and (472b).

(470) a. *It is a pizza.*

(471) a. *It is to her that you should talk.*

(471) b. *It is to her.*

(472) a. *It is because I left Joe that I am sad.*

(472) b. *It is because I left Joe.*
As for the definition in b), the literature is divided on the syntactic status of the sentence-final clause of clefts.\textsuperscript{200} To include the identification of the sentence-final clause with a relative clause in a general definition of cleft constructions is, therefore, already a controversial analysis of the structure.

Finally, addressing the point in c), the term co-indexation used in (469) is traditionally employed to describe co-referentiality holding between two syntactic objects, as shown in (473) below, a bi-clausal sentence in which the internal argument of the copula in the initial clause is co-indexed with the pronominal oblique argument of the final clause. However, although meeting the requirements reported in (469), (473) cannot be analyzed as a cleft construction.

(473) \textit{He is the man that you can always count on him.}

Contrary to (473), in a typical cleft sentence, a single syntactic object is shared by both clauses. As already discussed in chapter 3 for relative constructions, it thus seems more correct to identify the relation holding between this single syntactic object and the two positions within the clauses composing the cleft construction as one of syntactic and semantic sharing.

A different definition often employed aims at describing cleft sentences in more semantic terms (Prince 1978, a.o.), as in (474).

(474) A cleft construction (476) is a marked syntactic option semantically corresponding to a non-cleft form (475).

(475) \textit{They met their friend.}

(476) \textit{It is their friend that they met.}

The definition in (474) describes clefts exclusively in terms of their non-clefted counterpart, suggesting cleft constructions to derive from sentences exhibiting the syntactic form as in (475) without a change in truth conditions. This is a definition reflecting, again, one of the main theoretical approaches to clefts.

As a matter of fact, if we consider the sentences in (475) and (476), we can notice that the semantic content is the same. What changes is only the information structure, with the new information (\textit{their friend}) being placed after the given information (\textit{they met}) in (475) and a reversed order holding in (476). This is, however, also true when comparing (475) and (476) to (477).

(477) \textit{The person that they met is their friend.}
Although preserving the semantic content expressed in (475) and (476), (477) displays a very different syntactic structure from both sentences. I shall, therefore, rephrase the definition of clefts by avoiding any controversial claim on their syntactic analysis.

Lacking a better definition of clefts, I propose a description as in (478).

(478) A cleft construction consists of a sentence-initial copular clause. The copula is preceded by a pronoun and followed by a constituent and a dependent clause featuring a gap semantically and syntactically corresponding to the post-copular constituent. Semantically, cleft constructions are employed to focus attention on the post-copular constituent therefore bearing focal stress.\(^{201}\)

The claim that clefts are copular structures is shared by the two main theoretical approaches. As for the copular pronominal subject, its superficial presence seems to be directly dependent on the null subject parameter of the language. In a similar way, the overt presence of the copula in clefts is bound to the parametric specification of the language selecting an overt/covert copula.

Cleft constructions are attested in a number of typologically unrelated languages such as many European languages (e.g. English and Romance languages like French, Italian, and Spanish), Chinese (Teng 1979, a.o.) and Malayalam (Mohanan 1978), a.o.

Although languages display a rich variation as to the characteristics constituting a cleft construction, the following are some basic cross-linguistic features characterizing clefts:

a. a pronominal element introducing the structure (\textit{it} in the English examples below) that, following the tradition, I will refer to as the \textit{clefted pronoun};

b. a copula that can be a verb like \textit{be} or \textit{have}, even in the form of a bound morpheme (as in Boni, a Cushitic language);

c. an adcopular constituent (\textit{in the garden} in 476) that will be referred to as the \textit{clefted constituent};

d. a sentence-final clause that will be referred to as the \textit{cleft clause}.

Something more needs to be said about the clefted constituent and the cleft clause. As for the clefted constituent, it may be of different categories: an Noun Phrase, as in (470), an Adjectival Phrase (479), an Adverbial Phrase (480), a Prepositional Phrase (481), or a Complementizer Phrase (482).
The literature on clefts

(479) *It is soft that I would like my pillow to be.*

(480) *It is slowly that John prepared the cake.*

(481) *It is in the garden that Sarah left her car.*

(482) *It is because I love parties that Matt invited me.*

Its sentence-initial position makes the clefted constituent the most prominent element in the sentence and the element bearing focal stress.202

As for the cleft clause, it may be introduced by a complementizer, as in (482) above, by a relative pronoun, as in (483), or by nothing, as in (484).

(483) *It was the girl who kicked the ball.*
   (Kim 2012: 49)

(484) *It is a pizza the woman ordered.*

In the information structure of the cleft construction, the cleft clause generally bears presupposed, given information.203

Clefts may be defined as a syntactic strategy employed by languages to organize the information structure of the sentence in order to bring into focus constituents normally occupying a non-marked position within the sentence. Lambrecht (2001: 18–19) explains that “[...] cleft formation [...] results in the placement of syntactic constituents and prosodic accents in cognitively preferred positions from which the grammar of the language normally bans them, without causing ungrammaticality”.

The following section is dedicated to reviewing the main proposals suggested in the literature to derive cleft constructions.

7.2. The literature on clefts

Although there seems to be substantial agreement on the pragmatic function carried out by clefts (i.e. reorganizing the information structure of the sentence to single out one element bearing focal stress), the literature is very much divided on how to syntactically characterize the different components of cleft sentences as well as what the relation holding between them is.

The different contributions to the syntax of cleft constructions fall into two main approaches: what has been traditionally called the *extraposition analysis*, and the *expletive analysis*, the description of which I now turn to.
7.2.1. The extraposition analysis

The proposals labelled as the *extraposition analysis* (Jespersen 1927; Akmajian 1970; Emonds 1976; Gundel 1977; Wirth 1978; Percus 1997; Hedberg 2000, a.o.) concentrate on the cleft clause and the clefted pronoun forming a semantic unit. The clefted constituent is equated to this semantic unit via the copula.

In Jespersen’s (1927) first analysis of clefts, the cleft clause is the subject of the copular clause extraposed to a sentence-final position, hence the name *extraposition analysis*. The cleft clause has the internal structure of a restrictive relative clause discontinuously modifying the clefted pronoun with which it is associated, and appearing as an adjunct clause. The clefted pronoun is the subject of the sentence-initial copular clause and, in Hedberg’s (2000) terms, “the clefted constituent is the main predicator, linked to the subject by the copular verb”.

The movement of the cleft clause to sentence-final position is justified by a special transformational rule regarding cleft extraposition in Akmajian (1970) and Emonds (1976), and it is later accounted for as a right dislocated topical element in Gundel (1977) and Wirth (1978).

Within this approach, some proposals have suggested deriving clefts as extraposed variants of pseudocleft constructions (Akmajian 1970; Emonds 1976; Gundel 1977; Wirth 1978). The intuition unifying the different proposals is that clefts are a subtype of copular sentences. As such, the cleft sentence in (485) and the pseudocleft sentence in (486) present a similar derivation, the only difference being the extraposition of the RC to a sentence-final position in (485).

(485) *It is the director of the movie who I have met.*

(486) *Who I have met is the director of the movie.*

Under the extraposition analysis, the clefted pronoun is not an expletive, semantically-inert element; rather, it has the semantic function of a determiner.

Furthermore, the copula is not treated as an expletive element, but as a linking verb (Hedberg 2000) equating the clefted constituent to the semantic unit composed by the clefted pronoun and the cleft clause.

In the analysis carried out by Percus (1997) and Hedberg (2000), the clefted pronoun and cleft clause function pragmatically and semantically as a definite description with which they share an existential and exhaustiveness condition. This parallelism further assimilates clefts to copular sentences, the subject of which also contains a definite description. To illustrate, the presuppositions associated with the cleft sentences in (487) below act like the presuppositions associated with the definite descriptions of the copular sentences in (488). The inference in (487a) which corresponds to (487c) survives in its negative counterpart in (487b), as is the case in the copular sentences in (488).

(487) a. *It was Ohno who won.*  
   b. *It was not Ohno who won.*  
   c. *Someone won, and only one person won.*

(488) a. *The king of France is bald.*  
   b. *The king of France is not bald.*  
   c. *There is one and only one king of France.*

(Han and Hedberg 2008)

The facts illustrated above are accounted for if we assume the clefted pronoun to play the role of a definite article and the cleft clause to be its descriptive component.

A welcome outcome of analyzing clefts as copular constructions is the possibility of accounting for the distinction observed in clefts between identificational (485) and predicational (489) interpretations. The same distinction also holds in copular sentences (Higgins 1973; Heggie 1988) and in pseudocleft sentences (Partee 1987; Heggie 1988).

(489) *It is a lousy job that I’ve been offered.*

To illustrate the predicational interpretation of (489), (490) below represents a paraphrase where *a lousy one* is the predication of the complex NP *the job that I’ve been offered.*
(490) The job that I’ve been offered is a lousy one.

Within the extraposition analysis, Percus follows Jespersen’s (1928) proposal in claiming that clefts are copular constructions to which extraposition has been applied.

He further develops Jespersen’s idea, suggesting that the underlying structure of a cleft construction like the one in (491) is a copular sentence, the subject of which is a definite description containing a determiner and a relative clause with a null head, as shown in (492).

(491) It is [RICHARD] that I try to avoid.

(492)  
\[
\left[ \text{IP} \left[ \text{DP} \, \text{the} \, \left[ \text{CP} \, \text{OP}_i \, \text{that I try to avoid} \, t_i \right] \right] \right] \left[ \text{VP} \, t_j \, \text{is Richard} \right].
\]
(adapted from Percus 1997)

The null head (indicated as ‘\(\varnothing\)’) stands for the generic one, the interpretation of which holds for all entities of some category or type.

The overt structure in (491) is obtained by applying to the structure in (492) two main operations:

a. the extraposition of the relative clause to the end of the sentence, as in (493a);

b. the morphological transformation of the determiner selecting the CP trace as it, shown in (493b).

(493) a. \[
\left[ \left[ \text{IP} \left[ \text{DP} \, \text{the} \, t_k \right] \right] \left[ \text{VP} \, t_j \, \text{is Richard} \right] \right] \left[ \text{CP} \, \text{OP}_i \, \text{that I try to avoid} \, t_i \right]
\]

b. \[
\left[ \left[ \text{IP} \left[ \text{DP} \, \text{it} \, t_k \right] \right] \left[ \text{VP} \, t_j \, \text{is Richard} \right] \right] \left[ \text{CP} \, \text{OP}_i \, \text{that I try to avoid} \, t_i \right]
\]
(adapted from Percus 1997)

The trees in (494) represent the two stages of the proposed derivation.

(494) a. 
```
      IP
     /\  
    VP  
   /\   
  DP  
 /\   
 D the NP
 /\  
 NP CP
 /\ 
 \(\varnothing\) OP_i that I try to avoid t_i 
```
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b. 

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{IP} \\
\text{IP} \\
\text{DP}_j \\
\text{D} \\
\text{It} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{NP} \\
\varnothing \\
\text{VP} \\
\text{t}_j \text{is Richard} \\
\text{OP}_i \text{ that I try to avoid } t_i \\
\text{CP}_k
\end{array}
\]

(Percus 1997: 338)

The derivation proposed in (492) and (493) is consistent with the presupposition carried by clefts. Under Percus’s analysis, the equivalence between (491) and (495) derives straightforwardly from their sharing the same structure.

(495) *The one that I try to avoid is Richard.*

Percus extensively discusses how the sentences in (491) and (495) display the same properties (anaphor binding, variable binding, and the condition on NPI licensing) and how an analysis of clefts as definite descriptions is able to account for otherwise puzzling properties like semantic partition effects and the exhaustivity of focus in clefts (i.e. the incompatibility of clefts with adverbs like *even* and *also* and the redundancy with adverbs like *only*, receiving an explanation exclusively under the assumption that clefts are definite descriptions expressing the uniqueness of the referent).²⁰⁴

Percus suggests that independently motivated constraints on extraposition trigger the movement of the cleft clause to a sentence-final position, and that an independent spell-out rule determining the morphological transformation of *the* in *it* is at play in clefts. According to Percus, a similar rule is in use when clausal subjects, which are definite descriptions, are extraposed and an expletive construction appears.

(496) *That the shares are overvalued and that a decline is in order is widely believed on Wall Street.*

(= (12), McCloskey 1991, quoted in Percus 1997: 349)

(497) *It is widely believed on Wall Street that the shares are overvalued.*

(Percus 1997: 350)
The proposal advanced by the extraposition analysis presents many advantages:

a.  it is able to account for the existential and exhaustiveness condition clefts share with definite descriptions by interpreting them as a subtype of copular sentences;
b.  it accounts for the determiner-like status of the clefted pronoun in those languages where it is overtly realized and exhibits the same syntactic and semantic properties as determiners (although this does not explain the absence of the clefted pronoun in languages that do not realize it, e.g. Italian);
c.  it provides a unifying derivation for clefts and pseudoclefts;
d.  it accounts for the identificational and predicational interpretation of clefts;
e.  it structurally derives the relative-like features of the subordinate clause;
f.  it does not require positing a focus projection (FocP) hosting the clefted constituent, as identificational focus is assigned to the latter via the copula.

As for the point in e), according to Davidse (2000: 1116), the “non-NP” clefted constituents (APs, AdvPs, CPs, PPs) “are rankshifted into the nominal complement slot and are in this sense ‘nominalized’” (Halliday 1985: 219). Davidse proposes that the nominalized status of these heads is responsible for the impossibility of employing relative adverbs such as where, when, etc. in the cleft clause. She adds that when the clefted constituent is realized by “a rankshifted element such as adverb, prepositional phrase, or clause, then its semantic profile is that of a – reified – entity. Hence the ‘rankshifted’ units are systematically referred to by the relative pronoun that, and occasionally which, whose general categorial features are those of ‘inanimate/abstract entities’”.

Under the extraposition analysis, the underlying structure of clefts is not a simple proposition but rather, a copular clause, the subject of which is a definite description, i.e. a determiner modified by a relative clause. The only adaptation to bring the post-copular constituent into focus is the right extraposition of the complement of the definite description, i.e. the cleft clause.

One puzzle remains however to be solved. Under the extraposition analysis, it is, in fact, not clear how to account for the reconstruction effects displayed by the clefted constituent. Contrary to facts, under the extraposition analysis, the cleft clause does not appear to c-command the clefted
constituent at LF since it occupies the complement position of the D-like head. However, Percus (1997) observes that clefts like (498) pattern with copular sentences like (499) containing definite descriptions of subjects with respect to anaphor binding and variable binding (500–501) in the absence of c-command.

(498) It was herself\textsubscript{i} who Sarah\textsubscript{i} pitied.

(499) The one who Sarah\textsubscript{i} pitied was herself\textsubscript{i}.

(500) It is his book that every student sells.

(501) The thing that every student sells is his book.

Through the assimilation of clefts into copular sentences containing definite descriptions, Percus suggests that the same explanation holding for these latter might be extended to clefts. Although crucial to any analysis of cleft constructions, reconstruction effects in clefts have not been adequately explained by supporters of the extraposition analysis and will not be discussed here any further.

7.2.2. The expletive analysis

Under the competing approach, the so-called expletive analysis (Jespersen 1937; Chomsky 1977; Williams 1980; Delahunty 1982; Huddleston 1984; Rochemont 1986; Heggie 1988; Delin 1989; Kiss 1998, a.o.), the crucial relation is the one holding between the cleft clause and the clefted constituent to such an extent that the cleft sentence (502) is viewed in terms of its non-clefted counterpart (503).

(502) It is Laura (that/who) I admire.

(503) I admire Laura.

A crucial proposal of the expletive analysis, and the rationale behind its name, consists in the interpretation of the clefted pronoun, the copula and the relative pronoun as dummy, expletive elements not essential to the meaning of the sentence.

Furthermore, the cleft clause and the clefted constituent entertain a direct syntactic and semantic relation. More specifically, the clefted constituent is
syntactically associated with the gap in the cleft clause through movement or through co-indexation with an operator in the cleft clause. Abstracting from specific implementations, expletive analyses generally view the relation between the cleft clause and clefted constituent as a syntactic one, altered by movement of the latter to the left of the sentence. The clefted constituent is an argument or adjunct of the verb in the cleft clause from which it is moved. Pragmatically, the moved clefted constituent is assigned a focus-marking function.

As for the cleft clause, although formally resembling a restrictive relative clause (RRC), supporters of the expletive analysis underline the differences between the head of cleft clauses (identified in the clefted constituent) and the head of RRCs, thus claiming that the cleft clause does not have the internal structure of a RRC. More specifically, the evidence against a RRC interpretation of the cleft clause is the following.

a. The clefted constituent and cleft clause do not form a grammatical unit (Huddleston 1984: 461) as is, instead, the case of the head and its RRC.

(504)  Who was it at the door? It was the man who stole the purse.
(505)  Who stole the purse? It was the man who stole the purse.

While in (504) the complement of the copula is the NP and the RC *man who stole the purse*, the complement of (505) is only *the man*. In fact, as opposed to (504), a good answer to the question in (505) could also be *It was the man*.

b. As opposed to the head of RRCs, the clefted constituent may cover wider syntactic functions as an adjectival phrase, adverbial phrase, prepositional phrase or complementizer phrase (Quirk et al. 1972).

c. The clefted constituent may be a definite description unable to be further restricted by the cleft clause.

(506)  It is Mary whom I invited.

d. Cleft clauses are introduced more often than RRCs by complementizers and by no subordinative elements (*zero clauses*) rather than by *wh*-forms (Quirk et al. 1972; Huddleston 1984).

e. *Zero clauses* appear to be less problematic in clefts (Quirk et al. 1972; Huddleston 1984).

(507)  It was the boy stole the purse.
(508)  *The boy stole the purse ran away.*

Specifically, while RRCs do not admit the lack of a complementizer or relative pronoun with subject heads, as in the RRC in (508), clefts do (507).
f. Different intonation patterns for the two constructions are attested: a single tone-final unit for RRCs; and two tonal peaks in clefts, one on the focused clefted constituent and one on the final lexical item (Halliday 1967: 237);

On the other hand, some syntactic similarities associate cleft clauses with relative clauses:

1. they are introduced by the same relative elements;
2. they exhibit the same pattern of verb agreement;
3. in both constructions the head displays a semantic exclusiveness and exhaustiveness.

The trees in (509a) and (509b) respectively reproduce Heggie’s (1988) and Kiss’s (1998) implementations of such intuitions.

(509) a. 

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{IP} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{it} \\
\text{V} \\
\text{was} \\
\text{NP}_i \\
\text{CLINTON} \\
\text{CP} \\
\text{IP} \\
\text{I} \\
\text{t}_i \\
\end{array}
\]

b. 

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{IP} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{it} \\
\text{I} \\
\text{was}_k \\
\text{FocP} \\
\text{CLINTON}_i \\
\text{Foc’} \\
\text{F} \\
\text{t}_k \\
\text{who}_i \\
\text{C} \\
\text{C’} \\
\text{IP} \\
\text{I} \\
\text{t}_i \\
\end{array}
\]

(reporting in Hedberg 2000:911)
In both implementations, the subordinated status of the cleft clause derives from being selected as the complement of a higher copular clause.

As reported in Hedberg (2000: 912), while Heggie (1988) “[...] views the clefted constituent as the subject and the cleft clause as the predicate head of a D-structure small clause selected by the copula”, Kiss (1998) “[...] views the copula as an expletive head of a focus phrase, responsible for assigning identificational focus to the clefted constituent”. In Kiss’s analysis, the cleft clause is the complement of Foc’.

The derivation proposed by the expletive approach has the desirable result of being able to account for some properties displayed by cleft constructions such as:

a. anaphor binding: an anaphor in the clefted constituent can be bound by an element in the cleft clause.

(510)  *It is herself whom Mary reproaches.*

b. quantifier binding: a quantifier in the cleft clause can bind a pronoun in the clefted constituent.

(511)  *It is his car that every mechanic does not repair.*

c. negation in the cleft clause has scope over elements in the clefted constituent.

(512)  *It is coffee that I don’t want.*

d. agreement of the clefted constituent with the verb of the cleft clause when the former is subject of the latter.

(513)  *It is the children who run in the garden.*

All the properties described above are reconstruction effects of the clefted constituent in a lower position. Specifically (with the exception of d), they suggest that, at some point in the derivation, the clefted constituent must have occupied a position in the structure where it was c-commanded by an element of the cleft clause. Under the expletive analysis, this follows straightforwardly by assuming that the clefted constituent is generated as an argument or adjunct of the cleft clause.

In the next section, we shall complete the review on the analyses of clefts by briefly illustrating the proposals advanced within the cartographic approach to derive them.
7.3. A cartographic perspective on clefts

Within the cartographic approach, recent proposals for the derivation of clefts have been advanced by Belletti (2008). I shall now try to summarize Belletti’s contribution which will be relevant for the discussion on LIS clefts.

Along the lines traditionally proposed, starting from Burzio (1986) and Stowell (1983), Belletti assumes the hypothesis that the copula of clefts selects a small clause as its complement. She makes a distinction in the derivation of subject clefts and non-subject clefts by proposing that the clause selected by the copula in subject clefts is a CP with an EPP feature, referring to it as a small CP. Belletti’s proposal is that the small CP is a reduced CP lacking the projection of Force, the highest part of the CP projection.

By looking at Italian clefts, she proposes that the complementizer che (‘that’) introducing the cleft clause, as in (514), is not the realization of Force but the expression of finiteness.

(514)  
E’ GIANNI che assumeranno (non Maria).
‘It is GIANNI that they will hire (not Maria).’
(Belletti 2008: 14)

Evidence showing that che in (514) is not a Force head expressing the illocutionary content of the clause in clefts, but the lower Fin head, is provided by comparing (514) to the distribution of the complementizer with respect to a focalized constituent in the declarative CP complement of the verb dire (‘say’). As opposed to (514), the complementizer expressing the illocutionary force in (515) precedes the left peripheral focalized argument. Belletti suggests that the different position of the focalized constituent with respect to the complementizer is evidence that the two complementizers are expressing two different heads within the CP layer, namely, Fin in clefts and the highest one, Force, in declarative sentences of the kind in (515).

(515)  
Ho detto che GIANNI avrebbero assunto (non Maria).
‘I have said that GIANNI they would have hired (not Maria).’
(Belletti 2008: 14)

According to Belletti, within the small CP, the subject fills the specifier of the head carrying the EPP feature, an A type position, to then raise to the vP peripheral focus position. The copula also raises from vP to a higher functional head, as shown in (516).
(516) \[ \text{TP} \text{It} ... [\text{FocP} \quad ... \quad [\text{vP} \quad \text{is} \quad [\text{CP} \quad \text{John} \quad [\text{CP} \quad \text{that has spoken}]]]]] \]

By moving to the vP periphery of the copula and in particular to the specifier of a new information focus head, the subject, about which the small CP predicates some property, is associated with a new information focus, an interpretation specifically associated to this structural position.

In Belletti’s analysis, like subject clefts, the CP of non-subject clefts is truncated below the Force head.

Non-subject clefts differ from subject clefts in that there is no EPP feature to be satisfied. Thus, movement of non-subject arguments is an A’ type of movement: movement is no longer to the vP periphery of the copula but to the focus position of the reduced CP. Belletti proposes this left peripheral focalization to involve not just a new information focus but also contrastive/corrective focalization.

As opposed to subject clefts, in non-subject clefts there is no raising of the copula. Example (517) illustrates the derivation of non-subject clefts proposed by Belletti (2008).

(517) \[ \text{be} \quad [\text{CP} \quad \text{Force} \quad ... \quad [\text{FocP} \quad ... \quad [\text{FinP} \quad \text{that} \quad [\text{TP} \quad \text{S} ... \quad O/PP]]]]] \]

7.4. Clefts vs. root left peripheral focalization

This section sums up some observations reported in the literature underlying the difference between the kind of focalization present in clefts and the strategy adopted in root left peripheral focalization. The aim of this is to distinguish the two syntactic mechanisms and capitalize on their possible syntactic and semantic differences as a diagnostic to detect clefts in languages where their linguistic status is not obvious, like LIS.

Belletti (2008) observes how the assumption that the embedded focalized constituent in clefts (518) occupies the same position as the contrastively/correctively focalized phrase in sentences displaying root peripheral
focalization (519), namely the specifier of the high focus position within the CP, might suggest that the two focalizing strategies are superficially very similar.

(518) \textit{E’ con GIANNI che parleranno del problema (non con Maria).}
\begin{quote}
‘It is with GIANNI that they will speak of the problem (not with Maria).’
\end{quote}

(519) \textit{Con GIANNI parleranno del problema (non con Maria).}
\begin{quote}
‘With GIANNI they will speak of the problem (not with Maria).’
\end{quote}
\hfill (Belletti 2008: 14)

However, the two structures are different in their semantic value.

The literature on clefts (see Graffi 1977; Delahunty 1981, a.o.) reports contexts in which root peripheral focalization is possible but cleft constructions are not. These contexts are directly linked to the unique identification of the constituent in focus (see Kiss 1988; Abels and Muriungi 2005, a.o.) and to the presupposition of existence of the clefted constituent (Rooth 1995; Percus 1997; Kiss 1999; Frascarelli 2010, a.o.) not necessarily present in root left peripheral focalization. Belletti (2008: 15) adds that ‘[…] there is in clefts what we may call a presupposition of existence likely to be induced by the very presence of the copula […].’ The difference in semantic value between the two constructions can be observed when the focalized constituent is a quantifier.

(520) a. \textit{Hai fatto qualcosa?}
\begin{quote}
‘Have you done anything?’
\end{quote}
b. \textit{TUTTO ho fatto.}
\begin{quote}
‘EVERYTHING I did.’
\end{quote}
c. * \textit{E’ TUTTO, che ho fatto.}
\begin{quote}
*’It is EVERYTHING, that I did.’
\end{quote}

(521) a. \textit{Tu vuoi invitare Giorgio.}
\begin{quote}
‘You want to invite Giorgio.’
\end{quote}
b. \textit{No, CARLO, voglio invitare.}
\begin{quote}
‘No, CARLO, I want to invite.’
\end{quote}
c. \textit{No, è CARLO che voglio invitare.}
\begin{quote}
‘No, it is CARLO that I want to invite.’
\end{quote}
d. \textit{NESSUNO, voglio invitare.}
\begin{quote}
‘NOBODY, I want to invite.’
\end{quote}
What these examples illustrate, is that a cleft construction can be used only when it shares the same presupposition of the sentence to which it provides an answer.

(520c) cannot be the answer to (520a) because the latter does not presuppose the existence of something such that the interlocutor might have done it. In a similar way, (521a) presupposes the existence of someone such that the interlocutor would like to invite him; therefore (521e) is not a valid answer to it, as the presupposition of existence is negated by the clefted negative quantifier. Frascarelli and Ramaglia (2013) also show that NPIs are not allowed in focus position within clefts as they contradict the existence presupposition of clefts.

Further specifying the different semantic value of clefts, Spector (2012: 312) observes that “[...] clefts carry presupposition of uniqueness/exhaustivity of the element in focus (cf. Rooth 1995; Percus 1997; Kiss 1999). Thus, clefts are incompatible with adverbs such as even and also and redundant with only. Note that these adverbs are usually compatible with focus, so it must be something about clefts.”

(522) a. It was even/also/only the case that JOHN saw Mary.

b. ??It was even/??also/??only the case that it was JOHN who saw Mary.

(Spector 2012: 312)

Now that this section has briefly identified the main semantic differences between focalization in clefts and root left peripheral focalization, the next section illustrates cleft constructions in null subject languages with a covert copula.

7.5. Clefts in pro-drop languages with a null copula

As described in § 7.1, some constitutive elements of cleft constructions are the copula and its external argument, the clefted pronoun. Their covert nature in some languages might therefore lead to some difficulties in detecting the construction, as is the case with pro-drop languages displaying a covert
copula. At the same time, however, these languages might reveal features of clefts which would remain otherwise unobserved, shedding light on their syntax.

This section is devoted to looking at clefts in order to gain a better understanding of these constructions across languages and in Italian Sign Language specifically. Recall, from chapter 2, that LIS is also believed to be a pro-drop language displaying a null copula. The aim of this section is not to provide a detailed account of the analyses proposed in the literature to derive clefts in these languages, a task which would take us too far away from our final goal, but to look at cross-linguistic data in order to find correlations that may be relevant when analysing LIS cleft constructions.

Of the pro-drop languages displaying a covert copula, the first considered here is Russian.

Russian cleft constructions, so-called èto-cLEFTs, are composed of a sentence-initial pronoun, èto, followed by the clefted constituent and cleft clause, as in (523).

(523) Èto vodka Ivan vypil.
PRON vodka.ACC Ivan.Nom has drunk
‘It is vodka that Ivan has drunk.’
(Perazzato 2013: 28)

The clefted constituent of èto-cLEFTs can belong to different syntactic categories: an NP (523), an AP (524), a PP (525) or an AdvP (526).

(524) Èto kracnym mne hotelos’by pokrasit’
PRON red.STRUM 1ps.DAT want.3ps.pst.COND paint
dom
house.ACC
‘It is red that I would like to paint the house.’

(525) Èto v Mikele ja vljublena.
PRON of Michele 1ps.NOM in.love
‘It is Michele I’m in love with.’

(526) Èto včera ja hodila k vraču.
PRON yesterday 1.ps.NOM go.3ps.pst to.the doctor.DAT
‘It is yesterday that I had to go to the doctor.’
(Perazzato 2013: 35–36)
According to Kimmelman (2009), èto-clefts express not just focus but also constrastive meaning (527), and they require the presupposition of existence and uniqueness.

Window break Vasja no, èto Petja broke window
‘Did Vasja break the window? No, it’s Pete who broke the window.’
(Kimmelman 2009: 319)

As for the syntactic nature of èto, Hedberg (2000) convincingly argues it to be a contentful pronoun, not an expletive. As evidence for the claim, she shows that in Russian, raising and atmospheric verbs do not display any overt expletive (528a), as expected in a null-subject language, while cleft sentences display the same demonstrative elements employed by propositional anaphor sentences209 (528b).

(528) a. (*Èto) kazetsja cto on usel.
   (this) seems that he left
   ‘It seems that he left.’
   (*Èto) morozit.
   (this) is-freezing
   ‘It is freezing.’

   b. Èto Ivan (kto) prisol.
   this Ivan+nom who came
   ‘It was Ivan who came.’
   Èto ne pravda.
   this neg true
   ‘That’s not true.’
   (Hedberg 2000: 894)

We shall now consider Haitian Creole. Sentence (529) exemplifies a cleft construction in Haitian Creole introduced by an element, se, preceding the clefted constituent and cleft clause.

(529) Se Jan Mari renmen.
   se John Mary likes
   ‘It is John Mary likes.’
   (Déprez 2003: 5)

Se can precede verbal, adjectival, prepositional and nominal clefted constituents.
Déprez (2003) presents a detailed account of two main analyses proposed in the literature of Haitian Creole for the syntactic nature of *se*. In a nutshell, on the one hand *se* is argued to be some sort of copula serving as a link for predication (Lumsden 1990; Déprez and Vinet 1997). Supporters of this stand present arguments for their claim observing *se* to be in complementary distribution with TMA markers and the negative particle.

Déprez and Vinet (1997) propose *se* to be a last resort element, surfacing when the Pred head is empty.

On the other hand, *se* is analyzed primarily as a nominal element serving as a pro-form for the subject of the predication (DeGraff 1992). Supporters of the nominal status of *se* present data claiming *se* to be a deictic pronominal form, the subject of the following propositional anaphor sentences.

(530)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Se vrè.} & \quad \text{SE true} \\
\text{‘It is true.’} & \\
\text{Se pa vrè.} & \quad \text{SE not true} \\
\text{‘It’s not true.’} & \\
\text{Se te vrè} & \quad \text{SE PAST true} \\
\text{‘It was true.’} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

(De Graff 1992, reported in Déprez 2003: 29–30)

Furthermore, DeGraff (1992) shows that *se* can play the role of a resumptive pronoun, as in (531).

(531)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Kimoun ou te mande m [si se yon pwofèsè]?} & \quad \text{who 2sg PAST ask me if se a professor} \\
\text{‘Who did you ask me whether s/he is a professor?’} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

(De Graff 1992, reported in Déprez 2003: 29–30)

The last language we shall turn to is Hebrew.

As reported in Spector (2012), Modern Hebrew displays two types of clefts: *ze*-clefts (532) and focus-initial clefts (533). Here we concentrate on *ze*-clefts.

As exemplified in (532), *ze*-clefts are introduced by the pronoun *ze* followed by a focussed clefted constituent of any category and the cleft clause. Hebrew *ze*-clefts display a null copula in present tense sentences and
an overt copula after the sentence-initial pronoun ze in past or future tense sentences (534).

(532) ze AVIV še ohev lir’ot hisardut.
it AVIV that likes to-see Survivor
‘It’s Aviv who/that likes to watch Survivor.’

(533) AVIV hu (ze) še ohev lir’ot hisardut.
Aviv is it that likes to-see Survivor
‘Aviv is the one who/that likes to watch Survivor.’
(Spector 2012: 309)

(534) ze/zot hayit at Se ahavti.
it.masc.sgl./fem.sgl. be.2.fem.sgl.past. you.fem.sgl. that loved.1.sgl.
‘It was you that I loved.’
(Spector, personal communication)

Spector (2012) presents and discusses evidence pointing towards the non-expletive status of the initial pronoun ze by showing that:

(i) it alternates with demonstratives (535), but it does not pattern with expletives of raising verbs in European languages like French and English (536).

(535) a. It/this/that was John that I saw.
   b. It/*this/*that seems to me that you’re wrong.

(536) a. ze ET DANI še raiti.
it ACC Dani that saw.I
   ‘It was Dani that I saw.’
   b. (*ze) nir’a li še ata to’e.
it seems to-me that you mistaken
   ‘It seems to me that you’re wrong.’
   (Spector 2012: 324)

(ii) it can be a controller of PRO as (537b) shows, to be compared with (537a).

(537) a. ze DANI še halax iti la-mesiba [kedey PRO it lehoc le-kol ha-banot et ha-eynayim].
   ‘It was Dani who went to the party with me to make all the girls jealous.’
   Dani makes all the girls jealous.
b. \( \text{ze_1 DANI (še halax it_i la-mesiba)_i \{kedey \text{PRO}_i \text{lehoc}_i \text{le-kol} \text{ha-banot et ha-eynayim}\}} \)

‘It was Dani who went to the party with me (and by doing that) to make all the girls jealous.’

Dani’s going to the party makes all the girls jealous.

(Spector 2012: 324)

(iii) it inflects for gender and number to agree with the clefted constituent (538).

(538) \( \text{zot \_ AT \_ še eyn lax/la sigariyot.} \)

\( \text{it.FEM 2.FEM.SGL that NEG to-you/to-her cigarettes} \)

‘It’s you who doesn’t have cigarettes.’

(Spector 2012: 320)

Also, \( \text{ze} \) can be the subject of propositional anaphor sentences like (539), as opposed to atmospheric verbs displaying a null subject like in (540),\(^\text{210}\) as expected in null subject languages.

(539) \( \text{ze \_ naxon.} \)

\( \text{It \_ true} \)

‘It’s true.’

(540) \( \text{pro \_ kafu.} \)

\( \text{freezing} \)

‘It’s freezing.’

Being that Hebrew is a (partially) pro-drop language, arguments are also discussed showing that \( \text{ze} \) cannot be the copula of an expletive subject.

Spector furthermore illustrates how Hebrew clefts carry presupposition of existence of the element in focus, which is preserved under negation and in questions, as well as presupposition of uniqueness/exhaustivity of the focussed clefted constituent.

As anticipated, the brief review presented above of clefts in pro-drop languages displaying a covert copula is purely descriptive and not thorough enough to allow a deep understanding of their syntax. On the other hand, discussion of the robustness of the arguments presented by supporters of the different analyses to derive cleft in these languages is beyond the goal of this section. Our aim is to look at cross-linguistic data on clefts from a new perspective, possibly finding a correlation between them that would enable a better comprehension of the construction.
By separately considering null subject languages displaying a covert copula, I do not mean to propose an ad hoc derivation for them in the domain of clefts. In the spirit of minimalism, we look at them only to find clearer evidence for the syntactic features of clefts, hopefully leading us to a common derivation of the construction across languages regardless of their parametric variation.

Some similarities can be noticed when looking at the data on Russian, Haitian Creole and Hebrew clefts: (i) their clefted constituent can be of any syntactic category; (ii) they do not feature an overt complementizer, with the exception of Hebrew which however allows complementation deletion; and (iii) most strikingly, they feature the presence of a pronoun (respectively, éto, se and ze) introducing the construction and syntactically referring to the clefted constituent sitting next to it, with which it may agree in phi-features, as illustrated for Hebrew.

Although I am not able to provide evidence for the structural position and syntactic role of these pronominal elements, I can attempt to state what they are not: it seems unlikely that they are expletive subjects. This follows from two main facts: (i) we would expect expletive subjects to be null in pro-drop languages; and (ii) evidence is provided for each language clearly showing their nominal status.

Given that the observed languages are head-initial, one possibility we are left with is for the nominal element to be the thematic subject of the copular clause, as suggested by Spector (2012) for Hebrew ze-clefts. However, their obligatory presence as copular thematic subjects in the clefts of null subject languages needs somehow to be accounted for.211

A different possibility is to consider the pronominal element a syntactic unit with the clefted constituent. In this case, the unit composed of the pronominal element and the clefted constituent would be preceded by a null copula selecting a null expletive subject as its external argument, as expected and observed in the clefts of many null subject languages.

As outlined in § 7.2, a main difference between the two analyses advanced in the literature to derive clefts, the extraposition and expletive analyses, is the nominal referential versus expletive status of the pronominal subject of the copular clause.

However, neither analysis takes into consideration the possible presence of both an expletive (null) subject and a pronominal referential element within the copular clause of clefts.

Evidence for their simultaneous presence could partially reconcile the two proposals.
Interestingly, support for this possible analysis might come from applying to clefts Tang’s (2001) proposal of GAP (Generalized Anchoring Principle). We now turn to her proposal to see how it can fit with the evidence on clefts observed in the null copula languages above.

Tang (2001: 160) observes that, in Chinese, verbs can be omitted in copula-less predicative sentences (541) where the second nominal is the predicate of the first nominal.

(541) Zhangsan Zhongguoren.
Zhangsan Chinese
‘Zhangsan is a Chinese.’

However, copula-less predicative sentences in Chinese are only admitted in specific contexts: (i) in contrastive contexts, (ii) when they have a modified predicate nominal or (iii) a ‘specific’ predicate nominal, (iv) when expressing a subjective judgement, (v) in the presence of a focus adverb and (vi) when embedded. All these contexts, Tang suggests, share the presence of focusing effects induced by creating a contrast between the situation depicted and the alternative set of situations. In order to account for these facts, Tang (2001: 164) assumes “[..] that all sentences, including copula-less sentences in Chinese, are subject to a constraint that requires that every sentence in natural language be licensed at the interface levels, which is dubbed as ‘Generalized Anchoring Principle’ or ‘GAP’ (Tang and Lee 2000)”.

(542) Generalized Anchoring Principle
Every clause must be either tensed or focussed at the LF interface level.

According to Tang, GAP can be regarded as a ‘bare output condition’ requiring that every sentence be anchored to be fully interpretable at the LF interface and thus used by the external systems. She identifies two strategies to satisfy GAP in natural languages: “[..] sentences are either tensed or focussed in the sense that it highlights an item in contrast to a set of alternatives supplied by the context of utterance” (Tang 2001: 165).

In a nutshell, Tang proposes that Chinese copula-less predicative sentences lacking tense need to be licensed by focus anchoring in order to be well formed. Focus anchoring is thus a rescue strategy able to license otherwise unacceptable copula-less sentences in Chinese, thus satisfying GAP.

In trying to explain why omission of the copula is possible in some natural languages but not in others, Tang draws a correlation between the existence
of copula-less predicative sentences and the syntax of the predicate nominal. Starting from the premise that predicative nominals are NPs while non-predicative nominals are dominated by a functional projection, for example a Determiner Phrase (DP) (Szabolcsi 1987, 1992; Stowell 1991; Longobardi 1994), Tang suggests that, in languages where NPs are not dominated by a DP, they can be predicated of the subject directly (as in the Chinese sentence in 541), as opposed to languages like English, where a DP like a genius in (543a) cannot be predicated of the subject John directly and an inflected copula bearing tense features is required to make predication possible (543b).

(543) a. *John a genius.
   b. John is/was a genius.
   (Tang 2001: 168)

However, if the predicate nominal is bare in English, the expectation is that it can enter predication in copula-less sentences. The expectation is borne out in the English sentence in (544) and the German sentence in (545), where the bare nominals are predicated of the subject directly. However, in the absence of tense, predication is made possible by focus anchoring, i.e., by the presence of some focussed context: (544) involves a strong value judgement, and in (545) the name of the station is implicitly in contrast with the ones preceding and following it.

(544) You idiot!

(545) Nächste Bahnhof Friedrichstraße.
Next station Friedrichstraße
   (Tang 2001: 169)

Tang further suggests that the choice of GAP between tense or focus anchoring in a given natural language is determined by syntax. Supposing that temporal anchoring requires a tense operator in C, copula-less predicative sentences, being bare, lack the CP projection, and therefore no tense operator can occur and focus anchoring is the only option available. This is the case for Chinese predicative sentences. She specifies that “if we need a focus operator in focus anchoring, on a par with temporal anchoring, it could be the case that the focus operator can be adjoined to bare projections freely, regardless of whether there is a CP” (Tang 2001: fn10).

Something similar to copula-less predicative sentences might be at play in copula-less clefts.
Tang’s proposal might help us to provide an answer to the following question: why do clefts in copula-less languages display a focalizing functional/pronominal element marking the focussed constituent which does not surface in the clefts of languages with an overt copula? The answer can be spelled out in three main arguments.

(i) Given GAP, in the absence of tense, copula-less clefts must be anchored by focus to be licensed at the interface levels.

(ii) In Chinese predicative sentences the copula can be omitted. Let’s suppose that omission of the copula in these sentences is allowed by its lack of semantic and syntactic features. Tang points out that, in some situations, Chinese copula-less predicative sentences may sound unnatural if uttered in an out-of-the-blue context. In these cases, insertion of a focus adverb like only but not, for example, a temporal adverb, improves the sentence.

Given that clefts are structures specifically designed to bring into focus otherwise unmarked constituents and supposing that within cleft sentences the copula has semantic features, i.e. that it has some role in the unique and exhaustive interpretation of the clefted constituent following it, an overt focus marker carrying out similar functions is needed in copula-less cleft sentences.

(iii) While in Chinese predicative copula-less sentences predication takes place within the small clause, in clefts predication is cross-clausal. In fact, following the expletive analysis, a constituent of the dependent CP selected by the copular clause is extraposed. It can be proposed that, in the absence of an overt copula, the presence of a functional focus marker is further justified by the need to trigger movement of the clefted constituent to a position where it can be assigned focus.

Substitution of the copula with a focus marker could be also accounted for by considering that tense features carried by the copular clause of clefts are not always crucial in interpreting the cleft construction. Specifically, when the dependent clause is inflected, the tense features of the copula can either be present or past (546). However, when the dependent clause is uninflected (547), all tense and aspect features are realized by the copula. Sentence (547b) is ungrammatical because the copula carries present tense features but information on the time of action in the dependent clause is carried by an uninflected verb surfacing as a past infinitive.

(546) a. E’ stato il vecchio presidente che si è dimesso.
   ‘It was the old president that resigned.’

   b. E’ il vecchio presidente che si è dimesso.
   ‘It is the old president that resigned.’
We could therefore assume that substitution of the copula with a focalizing pronominal is possible and justified by the secondary role carried out by the copular tense features in inflected cleft sentences.

By analyzing the pronominal elements as deictic focus determiners as opposed to thematic subjects, we could account for their presence in pro-drop languages and propose a unitary derivation of clefts in overt copula and copula-less languages: regardless of their parametric variation, the copular clause always selects an expletive subject as its external argument. In copula-less clefts, a further step involves the presence in the derivation and lexical array of a focussed pronominal element anchoring the sentence and probing movement of the clefted constituent to a focussed projection hosting the pronominal element.

This line of reasoning is not too distant from some proposals advanced to derive copula-less clefts in the languages illustrated above: for Haitian Creole, Déprez (2003) suggests se to be a licenser of predication (of either the copula or the expletive) a proposal similar to Tang’s when she claims a licenser is needed to anchor the sentence in the absence of tense.

Tang’s proposal would also be able to account for the complementary distribution of Haitian Creole se with TMA: in the absence of temporal marking, the pronominal element licenses the sentence by anchoring it.

As for Russian, King (1993) proposes that èto occupies the specifier of a focus phrase and the clefted constituent its complement. According to King, the clefted constituent is moved within the focus phrase receiving a focussed interpretation by sitting adjacent to èto.

Finally, if we assume GAP, the dual pronominal and copular nature of elements like Haitian Creole se and Hebrew ze, might be reconciled with their being the same syntactic element carrying out different functions, rather than two distinct homophonic syntactic objects. They are nominal elements surfacing in copula-less clefts as focus markers and pronominal copulas in predicate nominal sentences, as in the Hebrew sentence in (548).

(548) dani ze mar kohen.
Dani PronZ mr. Cohen
‘Dani is Mr. Cohen.’
(Spector 2012: 325)
More evidence for the structural position of these pronominal elements, and thus for their syntactic role, may arise when looking at clefts in head-final copula-less languages like Italian Sign Language: we expect such pronominals to precede the clefted constituent if they are the thematic subjects of the copular clause and to follow it if they are focus markers, namely heads, selecting the clefted constituent as their complement. The following chapter will be, therefore, devoted to illustrating the data on what is claimed to be the equivalent of cleft constructions in Italian Sign Language and proposing an analysis of LIS clefts in view of the discussion outlined here.

7.6. Summary

The present chapter has attempted to isolate and illustrate the core features of cleft constructions, concentrating on what is shared cross-linguistically and maintaining a largely atheoretical approach (§ 7.1). The two main analyses of the syntax of clefts proposed for spoken languages, the extraposition and the expletive analyses, have been discussed (§ 7.2) with reference to the implementations provided by, Percus (1997) and Kiss (1998) respectively. The advantages and disadvantages of each proposal have been outlined.

The structural representation of clefts has further been enriched by Belletti’s (2008) cartographic proposal suggesting, within the expletive analysis, a fine-grained representation of subject and non-subject clefts (§ 7.3).

In order to better capture the syntactic nature of cleft constructions, § 7.4 concentrated on the differences between root left peripheral focalization and focalization of clefted constituents within clefts.

Finally, § 7.5 illustrated clefts in a subset of languages to which LIS belongs, namely, pro-drop languages with a covert copula. The description has revealed a common feature, namely the presence of a nominal element introducing the construction syntactically, and semantically referring to the clefted constituent. Tang’s proposal of GAP (Generalized Anchoring Principle) has been advocated to support the notion that, in copula-less clefts, the presence of a nominal focussing element is required to anchor the sentence and carry out the syntactic functions of the covert copula.

In the next chapter, the properties displayed by the LIS equivalent of cleft constructions will be illustrated and compared against the data and analyses discussed in this chapter.