

Title	The It-Cleft Construction [It be X that Y] : It-Pronouns in X
Author(s)	Shinohara, Hiroki
Citation	OUPEL(Osaka University Papers in English Linguistics). 2007, 12, p. 129-149
Version Type	VoR
URL	https://doi.org/10.18910/70811
rights	
Note	

Osaka University Knowledge Archive : OUKA

<https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/>

Osaka University

THE *IT*-CLEFT CONSTRUCTION [IT BE X THAT Y]:
IT-PRONOUNS IN X*

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the relationship between the *it*-Cleft construction, whose syntactic structure is [it be X that Y] and *it*-pronouns. In general, the typical components for X are NP and PP, and pronouns such as *this* and *that* which can stand in X as (1a). However, antecedent studies note that *it*-pronouns can't occur in X, as in (1b), even if *it* is admitted in the declefted sentence, as in (2). Declerck (1988) notes that this is because *it*-pronouns are stress-reduced anaphoric forms, but the construction requires X to be intonationally prominent. Delin (1992a) shows that this is because *it*-pronouns lack adequate semantic information to occur in X.

- (1) a. It was this/ that/ the woman who found the body.
b. Her dog was in the garden. *It was it that found the body.
(Delin 1992a: 1)
- (2) Her dog was in the garden. It/ That found the body.

However, *it*-pronouns in X are observed in (3) and (4), though I admit that *it*-pronouns are difficult to stand in X.¹

- (3) Title: The Peacock: My Dad was in the Royal Artillery in North Africa 1941 - 1942. One day his company made camp for the night beside a farm on the edge of the desert. The farm was a humble building with a tree beside it. As usual, they were required to dig slit trenches beside their position before settling down for the night. During the night they came under shellfire. Of course, pandemonium broke out, and my Dad, together with the rest, scrambled to get into one of the slit trenches. My Dad made

* I am grateful to Yukio Oba and Sadayuki Okada for their insightful comments. I would like to express my sincere and cordial gratitude to Autumn Dziura for stylistic improvements and being a source.

¹ Examples (3) and (4) are from a website. (3) is an article from The British Broadcasting Corporation on the web, and (4) comes from an anthropology's or sociology's paper.

it, into a trench beneath the tree, but shortly thereafter he felt an impact in his back. "God, I'm hit!" he thought. Immediately afterwards he heard someone screaming. In the melee, my Dad thought that HE was screaming, due to being hit. He looked up, and saw, perched in the branches of the tree, a peacock. The peacock was used by the farmer as a watchdog, and it was IT that was doing the screaming, terrified by the barrage. But, also, my Dad hadn't been hit by shrapnel... the terrified peacock had crapped right on top of him! (An article about WWII.)

- (4) "It is the cultivation of this art that unfetters the body, strengthens it and makes it upright; it is it that gives a becoming deportment and an easy carriage, activity and agility, grace and dignity;- it is it that opportunely awes petulance, softens and polishes savageness and rudeness, and animates a proper confidence; it is it which in teaching us to conquer ourselves, that we may be able to conquer others, imprints respect, and gives true valour, good nature and politeness; in fine, which makes a man fit for society:" (Anthropology Paper)

It is clear that the antecedent works' explanations are inadequate and a new one has to be considered. This paper shows what conditions make it-pronouns capable of occurring in X and the reason why it-pronouns are difficult to be there. The acceptability of it-pronouns in X is related to semantics, phonetics, functional perspective, and strategies in discourse.

The structure of this paper is as follows: The second section shows antecedent studies. In the third section, the semantic and phonetic constraints with contexts are considered. Specific analyses are in the fourth section. Two kinds of [it be it that] *it*-Cleft sentences are observed and their distribution are captured. The final is the conclusion.

2 ANTECEDENT STUDIES

The explanations in Declerck (1988) and Delin (1992a) are inadequate in that (i) they don't note the fact that *it*-pronouns may stand in X as (3) and (4), and (ii) their explanations have some problematic points. Other research about the elements in X, including Declerck and Delin, doesn't explain the phenomenon of *it*-pronouns in X (Emonds (1976), Yasui (1978), and Amano (1976)).

2.1 Declerck (1988)

Declerck (1988) notes the reason about the unacceptability of *it*-pronouns as (5).

- (5) The fact that the focus of a specificational sentence must be intonationally prominent concurs with the fact that, when an item has both a stressed and an unstressed form, only the stressed form will occur in the focus. Thus, the pronoun *it*, which is known to be the “stress-reduced” anaphoric form of *that* (Kuroda 1968: 250-251), cannot be substituted for *that* in *It is that that I don’t understand*.

(Declerck 1988: 14)

His explanation is questionable for two reasons. First, he divides *it*-Cleft construction into three types, in his book (refer to (6)), but the explanation about *it*-pronouns is limited to (6a), the Contrastive Cleft. In (6), each second line demonstrates the characteristics of the information structure, the third line is regarding the stress, and the fourth is the representative sentence. Stress is indicated by the word being capitalized. The symbol ‘##’ is used to show that the sentence is used in the first of the discourse.

- (6) a. Contrastive Cleft
 [It be New that Old]
 [X is heavily accented and Y is weakly accented.]
 It was JOHN who did it.
- b. Unaccented Anaphoric Focus Cleft
 [It be Old that New but represented as Old]
 [X is weakly accented and Y is normally accented.]
 It was he who knew where to find the BODY. (Hedberg 2000: 915)
- c. Discontinuous Cleft
 [It be New that New]
 [X and Y are normally accented.]
 ## 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)

What (5) shows is that the focus, namely X in this paper, has to be stressed, and this is only applicable to the feature in (6a). Thus, the relationships between *it*-pronouns and (6b) and (6c) are open to question. Especially, *it*-pronouns seem to occur in the Unaccented Anaphoric Focus Cleft in (6b), since the X’s stress feature, weakly accented, appears to be consistent with the characteristics that *it*-pronouns are stress-reduced anaphoric forms. The reason for the unacceptability of *it*-pronouns in (6c) is clear, since the Discontinuous Cleft is mainly used as a conversation opener and the listener can’t understand what is being referred to. For example, when your friend says to you suddenly, “*I love it!*” you are not able to understand what “*it*” is and you may have to ask to what he/she is referring.

Secondly, he regards *it*-pronouns as stress-reduced anaphoric forms, but

it-pronouns are allowed to have stress, as Delin (1992a) shows in (7). As before, the *it*-pronoun in (3) is capitalized and would be stressed when the sentence is read aloud. For these reasons, Declerck's explanation does not adequately explain the reason why *it*-pronouns are difficult to stand in X.

- (7) S: Judy, is there any more soap?
 J: If you look in the basket there's that purple one.
 S: I thought you were drying some out on the window. What happened to IT? (Delin 1992a: 7)

2.2 Delin (1992a) and Other Research

Delin (1992a) explains the unacceptability of *it*-pronouns in (8).

- (8) ...it contains no further distinguishing semantic information that would further the identification of the discourse referent already postulated by the appearance of the initial cleft pronoun. ... even the minimally-informative *he* and *she* contain number and gender information, which renders them more informative than the cleft pronoun of the *it*-cleft. (Delin 1992a: 11)

Delin regards the initial *it*-pronoun as a discourse entity, which shows that there is something, and considers that the discourse element is specified in X's information. According to her, pronouns like *he* and *she* have number and gender information and can specify the discourse entity, but *it*-pronouns lack enough information to specify the entity and therefore are not permitted. However, this explanation is questionable in that the number is informative, since *it*-pronouns can judge the number, like in (9), and are expected to stand in X. Thus, another explanation has to be considered.

- (9) a. He threw a cricket ball. It broke the window.
 b. * He threw cricket balls. It broke the window.

In addition to Declerck (1988) and Delin (1992a), other research about X (Emonds (1976), Yasui (1978), and Amano (1976)) can not explain the distribution. Emonds (1976) proposes that elements in X are NP and PP. Yasui (1978) explains the reason why the adjective in (10) is accepted as nominal usage, since the *black* is compared to a coffee with cream and sugar, and functions like NP, a black coffee.

- (10) Is it black that you take it, or with cream and sugar? (Bolinger 1972: 113)

Amano (1976) proposes that informative independent units can stand in X, and

explains the asymmetry in (11). *Carefully* is normally judged to be a less independent information unit, since the adverb is dependent on the verb. NP like *John* in (11) is easily understood as the referent independent of the verb, but *carefully* is not interpreted without relation to the verb. Namely, the reader understands who *John* is by the word alone, but does not understand what he does *carefully*. It might be driving, washing dishes, etc. Such things are determined by the relationship between the adverb and the verb. In addition to this, Amano notes that the *very* raises the value of information unit and makes *carefully* an independent unit. As a result, the sentence in (11) is accepted.

- (11) a. *It was carefully that Jon did it.
 b. It was very carefully that John did it. (Amano 1976: 68)

It is clear that *it*-pronouns are NP, noun, and independent information units, and their proposals expect *it*-pronouns to occur in X. However, they don't explain why *it*-pronouns are difficult to stand in X.

Section 2 shows that explanations in Declerck (1988) and Delin (1992a) are questionable. In Declerck (1988), the relationship between *it*-pronouns and Unaccented Anaphoric Focus Cleft are not considered and the criterion of stress does not capture the fact that *it*-pronouns are allowed to have stress, and in Delin (1992a), the means of explaining is not suitable. In other research, (Emonds (1976), Yasui (1978), and Amano (1976)), the proposals expect *it*-pronouns to occur perfectly, but don't explain the reason why *it*-pronouns are difficult to stand in X.

3 THE BOUNDARY CONDITION AND BOUNDARY ASSIGNER

Section 3 shows that there are conditions imposed by semantics and phonetics, though the two perspectives don't explain all of the reasons why *it*-pronouns are difficult to stand in X. It is said that *it*-pronouns refer to two kinds of antecedents: the proposition in (12a) and the noun in (12b). I call these former propositional *it*-pronouns and the latter nominal *it*-pronouns. Clefting (12) leads to unacceptability, as in (13). The condition proposed here does not explain both (13a) and (13b), but the proposal can capture the reason for (13a). Namely, propositional *it*-pronouns in X are excluded.

- (12) a. Tome knew that Joanne wanted to sell the car, and it/ that bothered him considerably.
 b. She bought a blanket during her lunch hour and brought it/ that back with her to the office.
 (Kamio & Thomas: 1999:289-290 (underlines are mine))
- (13) a. Tome knew that Joanne wanted to sell the car, and it was *it that/ that which bothered him considerably.
 b. She bought a blanket during her lunch hour and it was *it that/ that

which she brought back with her to the office.

3.1 Wide Reference and Narrow Reference and Semantics in the *it*-Cleft Construction

Among various research on pronouns (Bolinger (1977), Ariel (1988, 1990), Gundel et al. (1993), Takahashi (2004) and others) Kamio and Thomas (1999) indicate interesting characteristics about propositional *it*-pronouns and *that*-pronouns, namely wide reference and narrow reference. Propositional *it*-pronouns refer to the referent widely, while propositional *that*-pronouns refer to the referent narrowly. Kamio and Thomas's example is (14) and corresponding explanation is (15)

- (14) Sonja was born out of wedlock, but I never revealed *it/ that* to her.
 (15) *It refers to broadly to a set of related facts and events: it means something like "that Sonja was born illegitimately, and the whole story of her mother's disastrous affair with the Prime Minister, international intrigue which resulted from it, etc. ... that means ... simply that the speaker never told Sonja that her parents were unmarried at the time of her birth.* (Kamio and Thomas 1999: 296)

The point is that propositional *it*-pronouns refer to a whole of events formed by a set of related facts and situations, while propositional *that*-pronouns refer to only the previous sentence.

Next, I turn to the semantics in the *it*-Cleft construction. Among many works (Delin (1992b), Delin & Oberlander (1995), E. Kiss (2000) and others), it seems to be admitted that the *it*-Cleft construction has an exhaustive meaning. The exhaustive is achieved by excluding other members than X and identifying X to the variable in Y's open proposition. This is exemplified in (16) and (17). Given this, it is explained that *everyone*, one of the universal quantifiers, is not permitted in X, as in (17). This is because *everyone* refers to all people in a group without excluding a person and is inconsistent with the part that excludes other members as in (17).

- (16) It was John who kissed Mary.
 Exhaustive: Excluding the other members than *John* and *someone* in [*someone kissed Mary*] is identified with *John*.
 (17) *It was everyone who ignored Mary.
 Exhaustive: Excluding ??? and *someone* in [*someone ignored Mary*] is identified with *everyone*.

What is important here is that the elements in X have to meet part of the excluding. If this were not the case, the sentence would not be accepted, like in (17). In the next section, the connection between the exhaustive meaning and wide reference is shown.

3.2 Contradiction between Propositional *it*-pronouns and Exhaustive

It has been shown in 3.1 that propositional *it*-pronouns have the characteristic of wide reference and refer to a whole of events consisting of a set of related facts and events. In addition, from the exhaustive meaning in the *it*-Cleft construction, the elements in X are considered to be distinguished from other members in some sense to exclude other members. Otherwise, part of the excluding would not work as the case of *everyone* in (17). I call this the Boundary Condition and define this as (18).

- (18) The Boundary Condition: Elements in X must have boundaries in some sense to exclude other members.

Considering the Boundary Condition and the characteristics of propositional *it*-pronouns, the unacceptability of the pronouns in X is explained, since the pronouns refer to a whole of events and the boundary to be distinguished from other members is too ambiguous to satisfy the condition in (18).

What the Boundary Condition implies is that elements which do not normally stand in X may be there if a boundary is assigned. I call this assigner the Boundary Assigner. This is exemplified in (19)-(22).

- (19) a. A: Who ignored John?
 B: *It was everyone (who ignored him).
 b. A: Who ignored John?
 B: It was everyone in the class (who ignored him).
- (20) a. *It was carefully that Jon did it.
 b. It was very carefully that John did it. (Amano 1976: 68)
- (21) a. *It was quickly that the children ate their dinner.
 b. The children ate their dinner how? - Quickly. Quickly, the children ate their dinner. It was quickly that the children ate their dinner.
- (22) a. *It's in the French style that they cook.
 b. Is it in the French style that they cook?
 c. It isn't in the French style that they cook. (Amano 1976: 73)

The Boundary Assigner is in the class in (19), very in (20), Quickly, Quickly in (21) and question and negation in (22). In (19), everyone in the class is compared with other classes and there is a boundary to distinguish them. In (20), the word, very, distinguishes the degree of carefulness; very carefully vs. carefully. Similarly Quickly, Quickly functions as Boundary Assigner to show the differences between the degrees of slowness. In (22), the interrogative and negative sentences are compared with the affirmative sentences and are able to be distinguished. Thus, Boundary Assigners add words like in the class in (19), very in (20) and contrastive contexts in (20)-(22).

From above, it is expected that propositional *it*-pronouns, while difficult to stand in X, may occur in X with a Boundary Assigner. Only negations and questions with phonetic requirements allow the propositional *it*-pronouns to be there. A negative

it-Cleft sentence in (23a) is accepted, while the affirmative sentence in (23b) is not. In (24a), the sentence is not permitted because of the word order, *Is it it that...* This pronominal sequence is phonetically strange. If the sequence is solved as in (24b), the sentence is permitted. However, all negative and interrogative *it*-cleft sentences allow propositional *it*-pronouns to stand in X, as (25) shows, though it is certain that the contexts raise the acceptability in some degree. Therefore, the Boundary Condition is just one of the regulations for *it*-pronouns to occur in X.

- (23) a. As you know about Japanese characteristics, we tend to dislike doing things differently from others, and like belonging to a group. But it is not it that made you feel that the Japanese are too boring. Rather, the problem is that most Japanese don't realize what we, the Japanese, are like.
 b.??As you know about Japanese characteristics, we tend to dislike doing things differently from others, and like belonging to a group. And it is it that made you feel that the Japanese are too boring.
- (24) a. A: As you know about Japanese characteristics, we tend to dislike doing things differently from others, and like belonging to a group.
 B: ??Is it it that made me feel that the Japanese are too boring?
 b. A: As you know about Japanese characteristics, we tend to dislike doing things differently from others, and like belonging to a group.
 B: So, do you mean that it is it which made me feel that the Japanese are too boring?
- (25) a. *Tome knew that Joanne wanted to sell the car, and it was it that bothered him considerably.
 b.??Tome knew that Joanne wanted to sell the car, and it was not it that bothered him considerably.

Boundary Assigners other than question and negation might be found, but it is hard to image, since adding words begins to sound strange, like in (26). Also *it*-pronouns do not work as the target of a comparison as (27) (Kamio and Thomas (1999)).

- (26) a. *It, It, It's it that...
 b. *It was very it that...
 c. *It was it around the tree that...
 (27) Any policeman can run faster than that/ *it.

(Kamio and Thomas 1999: 297)

Question and negation seem to similarly raise the acceptability of nominal *it*-pronouns in X, as in (28) and (29). As mention above, the context just raises the degree of the acceptability and does not always make *it*-pronouns in X acceptable as (28) shows, even if nominal *it*-pronouns refer to a noun and satisfy the Boundary Condition. Therefore, in order to explain the distribution of *it*-pronouns in X completely, other criteria must be considered, which is shown in the next section.

- (28) a. *Her dog was in the garden. It's it found the body.
 b.??Her dog was in the garden. It was not it that found the body.
- (29) a. A: Who drank my beer? Why is that empty?
 B:*Your dog was in the garden. It was it which drank your beer.
 b. A: Who drank my beer? Why is that empty?
 B: Your dog was in the garden.
 A: Do you mean to say it was it which drank my beer?

In summary, this section has shown that (i) propositional *it*-pronouns in affirmative sentences are excluded from X, since the pronouns refer to a whole event and do not satisfy the Boundary Condition in (30) or (18), but (ii) some words and contexts raise the acceptability, since they assign a boundary to be distinguished from other members and meet the Boundary Condition. However, the condition is just one of the requirements to explain the distribution.

- (30) The Boundary Condition: Elements in X must have boundaries in some sense to exclude other members.

4 ANALYSIS: TWO TYPES OF [IT BE IT THAT...]

There are two types of [it be it that]-*it*-Cleft sentences. The one is for highlighting the exhaustive meaning, which has been introduced as 3.1, and the information status of the proposition is highly accessible in the case of Ariel (1988, 1990) or in focus in the case of Gundel et al. (1993). In other words, the information is quite old. The other type of [it be it that]-*it*-Cleft sentence is related to rhetorical usage or strategies in discourse, since the judgment about the acceptability seems to depend on whether the listener understand the author's attitude. The difference between them is clear. Let's look at (31) and (32).

- (31) Title: The Peacock: My Dad was in the Royal Artillery in North Africa 1941 - 1942. One day his company made camp for the night beside a farm on the edge of the desert. The farm was a humble building with a tree beside it. As usual, they were required to dig slit trenches beside their position before settling down for the night. During the night they came under shellfire. Of course, pandemonium broke out, and my Dad, together with the rest, scrambled to get into one of the slit trenches. My Dad made it, into a trench beneath the tree, but shortly thereafter he felt an impact in his back. "God, I'm hit!" he thought. Immediately afterwards he heard someone screaming. In the melee, my Dad thought that HE was screaming, due to being hit. He looked up, and saw, perched in the branches of the tree, a peacock. The peacock was used by the farmer as a watchdog, and it was IT that was doing the screaming, terrified by the

barrage. But, also, my Dad hadn't been hit by shrapnel... the terrified peacock had crapped right on top of him!

=(3) [Information Structure: it be it that Old]

- (32) "It is the cultivation of this art that unfetters the body, strengthens it and makes it upright; it is IT that gives a becoming deportment and an easy carriage, activity and agility, grace and dignity;- it is IT that opportunely awes petulance, softens and polishes savageness and rudeness, and animates a proper confidence; it is IT which in teaching us to conquer ourselves, that we may be able to conquer others, imprints respect, and gives true valour, good nature and politeness; in fine, which makes a man fit for society:"

=(4) [Information Structure: it be it that New]

Firstly, the two types are different in terms of information structure. The first type is [it be it that Old] as (31), but the second is [it be it that New] as (32). Secondly, the opinion regarding acceptability of these seems to vary, since the native speakers' feelings toward the first type are clear, but regarding the second, they are not. For example, the native speakers' opinions on (33) tend to be ambiguous; some accept it, while others don't. The opinions on acceptability of the second seem to differ from the first. The second type makes the listeners feel that the speaker strongly emphasizes the proposition, and requires the readers to interpret the proposition as true, even if the truth of the proposition is suspicious. In fact, native speakers that were asked said that they feel that the second type is presumptuous, snobby and so on, as opposed to the first. The first type is shown in 4.1 and the second in 4.2.

- (33) ?Title: Red River Delta. Vietnam's history is linked closely with this Red River (or Sông Hồng). It is It that forged the Viet soul. It is It that has petrified the thick identity of the Vietnamese people.

(Brochure about Vietnam)

4.1 Only Exhaustive

Among many works, it has been said that the function of the *it*-Cleft Construction is to highlight the elements in X. However, if we only consider this, the phenomenon of [it be it that]-*it*-Cleft sentences would be never solved at all. Of course, I admit that function is the main function of the *it*-Cleft construction, but it has to be noted that there are also usages which highlight only the exhaustive meaning, and not the information. First, look at the reason why such traditional views never explain the *it*-occurrences in X, and then pick up the *it*-Cleft sentences specializing in the exhaustive meaning.

For example, given that the elements in X have to be informative as new information or comment, *it*-pronouns can't be there like in (34), since (i) the listener does not understand what the pronoun is, namely what A refers to by *it*, and (ii) the

context is not consistent with the function of *it*-pronouns.²

(34) A: What broke the window? B: It was *it/ the stone.

Considering what information is requested in the context, namely the *wh*-question, that is the information which the listener does not know or notice now. However, the function of *it*-pronouns requires the referent to be in focus in the sense of Gundel et al. (1993).³ Elements in focus mean that the referent is not only put into short-term memory, but is also at the current center of attention. Namely, the referent of the *it*-pronouns is one which the listener and speaker have already known and do not pay extra attention to (deliberately). For example, when you want your child to pay attention to something, you say “*Look at that/*it!*” The *it*-pronouns are not suitable for such usages. Thus, the context is inconsistent with *it*-pronouns; the element required by the question is one which the listener does not know or notice, but the referent of the *it*-pronoun is shared information between the speaker and the listener.

Even if the elements have to be informative as topic, the result would be the same as above. As in example (35), the writer emphasizes *the book* as the topic to draw in the listener’s attention, even though the reader can understand the topic in the situation easily, namely, what the sentence is about, *the book*, without emphasis.

(35) But why is this book so important? Apparently, it is *it/ the book that enables linguists to understand how influential the Bible is.

This point causes the unacceptability and the reason why *it*-pronouns are difficult to stand in X normally. The function of *it*-pronouns requires the element to be in focus, and do not need to be paid extra attention to. The speaker wants the listener to pay attention to X, and the X has to be noticed, but *it*-pronouns are used when the speaker and the listener interpret the referent easily without additional attention to the referent. The same thing occurs in topicalization, as (36) shows.⁴

² I use topic/comment in the sense of Gundel (1988) and Hedberg (1990). The definition is (i).

(i) a. Topic Definition: An entity, E, is the topic of a sentence, S, if in using S the speaker intends to increase the addressee’s knowledge about, request information about, or otherwise get the addressee to act with respect to E.

b. Comment Definition: A predication, P, is the comment of a sentence, S, if in using S the speaker intends P to be assessed relative to the topic of S.

Thus, comment expressions are relatively new to topic expressions. In addition to (i), Gundel notes that topic or comment is not always represented as a linguistic expression, and stress is assigned to comment.

³ As for the functions of *it*-pronouns, see (Ariel (1988), Kamio and Thomas (1999), Takahashi (2004) and so on. Ariel notes that *it*-pronouns are highly accessible, Kamio and Thomas indicate that the information has already been known and already entered into the speaker’s central store of knowledge. Takahashi shows that *it*-pronouns are highly ambiguous, salient in a cognitive grammar sense and in short-term memory.

⁴ This also demonstrates the relationship between *it*-pronouns and Unaccented-Anaphoric-Focus Clefts [it be old that new]. The reason why *it*-pronouns is not accepted is that the old in X is considered a topic expression and the topic has to be informative to be paid attention to, but *it*-pronouns do not need the attention as mentioned there. Thus, this is the answer to the question in Declerck (1988), which have been picked up in 2.1.

Topicalization has an ambiguity about whether the fronted element is a topic or comment without context. Whichever the element is, there is no doubt that the speaker emphasizes the element as a topic or comment. Therefore, the highlighting function of topicalization, as well as the *it*-Cleft construction, causes the inconsistency between the fronted elements and the function of *it*-pronouns.

- (36) a. John broke the flower vase. John broke it.
 b. The flower vase, John broke. *It, John broke.
 c. It's the flower vase that John broke. *It's it that John broke.

Note that it is important that *it*-pronouns are difficult to stand in syntactic places where informative elements normally occur, like in (36). *It*-pronouns require the referents to be in focus, not informative, while the syntactic placements require the elements to be important and informative.

However, there are some usages which highlight the exhaustive meaning as (37) shows.

- (37) Man was the pinnacle of god's creation and was distinct from other animals in that he possessed morals, ethics, and a superior intellect. As the noted historian, Professor William Whewell noted, man's most remarkable features are his mental and moral capabilities, and it was these that distinguished man from the apes.

In (37), the referents of *these* in X are presented in the antecedent sentence and *distinguish man from the apes* in Y is inferred from the first sentence. Thus, this *it*-Cleft sentence is not used for telling new information. Rather, this is for emphasizing the relationship between X and Y, namely the exhaustive meaning. Telling that the variable in Y, *something in something distinguished man from the apes*, is identified with *these*, not any other except *these*, emphasizes the relationship. When considering the case of (31), the result is the same as (37). The referent of the *it*-pronoun and the proposition of Y are presented before, and the sentence, *it was IT that was doing the screaming*, connects X and Y and emphasizes the relationship through the exhaustive meaning. Only in such cases, [it be it that]-*it*-Cleft sentence is this permitted. I propose (38).

- (38) The first type: [it be it that old information]-*it*-Cleft sentences are permitted when the relationship between X and Y is emphasized through the exhaustive meaning. Moreover, Y's information status has to be the same as *it*-pronouns. Of course, *it*-pronouns have to meet the function, in focus, and The Boundary Condition (shown in (18)).⁵

⁵ Three things have to be noted. First of all, if I write the topic/comment structure, the topic is [the relationship between X and Y] and the comment is [exhaustive]. Namely, the relationship between X and

From now, constructed examples to prove (38) are shown. See (39).

- (39) a. As you know about Japanese characteristics, we tend to dislike doing things differently from others, and like belonging to a group. But it is not it that made you feel that the Japanese are too boring. Rather, the problem is that most Japanese don't realize what we, Japanese, are like.
- b. As you know about Japanese characteristics, we tend to dislike doing things differently from others, and like belonging to a group. And it is ??it that/ that which made you feel that the Japanese are too boring.

The interesting point in (39) is that native speakers interpret Y as new information in (39b), while as old information in (39a), though the content of Y is not represented in the string of sentences. This is connected with the observations in 3.2 that question and negation raise the acceptability of [it be it that]-*it*-Cleft sentences. Bolinger (1977) notes that *that*-clauses in questions and negations allude to definite information, and/or the topic in the sentence. That is to say, *that*-clauses tend to be interpreted as old information. Another example of proof is shown in (40), where *indeed* raises the acceptability. It is easily expected that the meaning of *indeed* implies that the proposition related to the word is already known information. Therefore, the information status in Y has to be old.

- (40) a. *Cheryl just got a job as air traffic controller. It was IT that she had always wanted to be.
- b. ?Cheryl just got a job as air traffic controller. Indeed, It was IT that she had always wanted to be.

Finally, the constructed example in (41) admits (38). To make a situation where (i) that the referent of the *it*-pronouns is in focus, (ii) the referent meets the Boundary Condition in (18), (iii) the speaker emphasizes the relationship between X and Y, and (iv) the proposition in Y is old, allowing the [it be it that old information]-*it*-Cleft sentence to occur.

- (41) A: Can you believe that Joey made a pass at Judy? Does it mean that he has already gotten tired of me?
 B: What a disgusting man he is! What revenge are you thinking about?
 A: Calling Tommy to go on a date.
 B: That's not a good idea. Tommy is one of the guys who he dislikes.

Y is determined to be an exhaustive relationship. Then, this type might be judged to be the Contrastive Cleft [it be new that old] in Declerck (1988) shown in (6a), since the *it*-pronouns are stressed. However, the first type is inconsistent with Contrastive Clefts in that X in the first type is clearly old information, while X in Contrastive Cleft is new. The third point is about the part, *Y's information status has to be the same as it-pronouns*. This means that the information status in Y is not just old, but old as much as in focus. I do not treat the relation in detail here. That is an issue in future.

After that, you might not get back together. How about serving foods which he dislikes? If I remember rightly, he has a little allergy to salmon. How about cooking salmon broiled with salt for a week and getting him back.

A: That's a good idea! It's that which I have to cook!

B: Yes, it's it which you have to cook!

In (41), the referent of the *it*-pronoun in X is in focus, since the referent is the topic of the conversation in final B's utterance. In other words, it has been put into short-term memory and is at the current center of attention. The Boundary Condition is also met, since the referent is *salmon*, NP. It is also clear that the speaker emphasizes the relationship between X and Y rather than telling something new to the listener and Y is old.⁶

In summary, the distribution of the first type [it be it that]-*it*-Cleft sentences can never be captured, if the researchers consider only that elements in X have to be informative in some sense. However, there are cases emphasizing the relationship between X and Y through the exhaustive meaning. In such cases, the first type is accepted. The specific conditions are stated in the following, example (38).

- (42) The first type: [it be it that old information]-*it*-Cleft sentences are permitted when the relationship between X and Y is emphasized through the exhaustive meaning. Moreover, Y's information status has to be the same as *it*-pronouns. Of course, *it*-pronouns have to meet the function, in focus, and The Boundary Condition in (18).

4.2 Rhetorical Usages or Strategies in Discourse

As was mentioned at the beginning in the forth section, there is another type of [it be it that]-*it*-Cleft sentence. This second type is strongly related to rhetorical usage or strategies in discourse, while the first type is associated with the emphasis on the

⁶ The reason why the *that*-pronoun, not the *it*-pronoun, fills in X in the final A's utterance comes from the differences between *it* and *that*. In fact, if *that* in X is changed with *it* in A's final utterance, the sentence is not accepted. Kamio and Thomas (1999) note that the information of the *it*-pronouns has already been known, while the *that*-pronouns are new incoming information that may be either novel or familiar. See (i).

(i) A: Just 200 years ago, Japan was closed to all foreign trade.

B1: ??/* It surprises me.

B2: That surprises me.

(Kamio & Thomas 1999: 294)

The response made in B1 is unacceptable, since the verb *surprise* indicates that A's statement is novel information to B, while the *it*-pronoun requires the referent to have been already known. B2 is fine since the referent of *that* requires the referent to be incoming information and the A's proposition meets the requirement. According to this, the *that*-pronoun in the A's final utterance in (41) meets *that*-pronouns, not *it*-pronouns, since the referent, *salmon*, is represented in the antecedent A's utterance and corresponds to the incoming information, not to the previously known information.

relationship between X and Y. Of course, the second type has the same constructional meaning as the first type, but the usages are quite different. Things related to this are initially introduced by Prince (1978). She indicates that *it*-Cleft sentences whose information status of Y is new, have the function called the Known Fact Effect. This means that the new information in Y is treated as known fact.⁷ Refer to (43).

- (43) ## 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. = (6c)

In (43), the ## indicates that the sentence is used in the first of the discourse and the information in (43) is all new, the same way it was used before. In general, the Y in the typical *it*-Cleft construction shows presupposed, old information: e.g. A: *Who kissed Mary?* B: *It was John (who kissed Mary).* Therefore, the Y shows new information and is expected to be strange, but the *it*-Cleft sentence is used for rhetorical or strategies in discourse through the Known Fact Effect. That is to say, the writer intends the reader to interpret Y as known fact, though the actual status is unknown or new. The second type [it be it that]-*it*-Cleft sentences are related to this, since both information statuses in Y in (32) and (33) are new, but the speaker seems to intend the listener to understand that the information is known facts, though the actual information statuses are not.

However, the Known Fact Effect in the [it be it that]-*it*-Cleft sentences seems to differ from other cases. Specifically, why do (32) and (33) make some native speakers feel that it is presumptuous, snobbish, etc? In the case of [it be that which new information]-*it*-Cleft sentences, like (44) and (45), such feelings do not seem to occur.

- (44) [This story is about the cost to keep fish] Q: Is there a way of calculating the cost of electricity used by fish tanks, i.e. the lights, heater, air pump and so on? A: Electricity costs about 6.5p per Kilowatt every hour. The average fish keeper uses 150W of heating, 14W of lighting, and 12W of pumps which totals 176W, costing 1.14p per hour. However heaters only operate part of the time, so it is generous to say 1p per hour. This comes to per quarter. Resisting the aquarium to a warm living room will cut this cost by anything up to 50% because the heater will only operate briefly, and it is that which is the main use of power.

(BNC CGH (underline is mine))

- (45) My school life, therefore, was interesting and varied. I had plenty of friends, I involved myself in cultural events, I had my sporting association and I just lived a typical life of a kid growing up on the Far North Coast. I did not take to the waves on a board like some of my friends, but nor did I

⁷ Typical *it*-Cleft sentences, [it be New that Old] or stressed focused *it*-Cleft in Prince (1978), also presuppose the effect, since the information status of the *that*-clause is old and has been already presupposed. That is known fact.

sit at home wondering why me. And the key to it was I had enjoyed a mainstream education. It was that which provided me with the opportunity to study hard and to feel as if I was always a part of society. It was that experience which confirmed and affirmed my rights as an individual. I had no limitations, as far as I could see, and I felt as if I could turn my hand at anything that took my fancy.

(From Matt Laffan's web page. He is a public speaker with disabilities, and the sentences are about his memory of attending school.)

Besides, if the clause is interpreted as known fact, how is the asymmetry between (46) explained? In the case of the *that*-pronoun, the Y is new, but interpreted as known and the known fact is gained in (46). Thus, the *it*-pronoun might be expected to be accepted, but that is not permitted actually.

(46) Her dog was in the garden. It was *it that/ that which found the body.

From this, I propose (47).

(47) The Y in [it be it that new information]-*it*-Cleft sentences has to be interpreted as known fact. In addition, the listeners are required to interpret the speaker's syntonic attitude. Otherwise, the sentence would not be accepted. Of course, *it*-pronouns have to meet the function, in focus, and The Boundary Condition (shown in (18))⁸

In order to introduce the idea of the speaker's syntonic attitude, let's see (48) and (49).

(48) [A rushes into the room excitedly]

A: Guess what! I just won the lottery!

B1: *It's amazing!

B2: That's amazing! (Kamio and Thomas 1999: 291)

(49) A: My dog was just bitten by a poisonous snake!

B: I'm sorry hear it. Will he be all right? (Kamio and Thomas 1999: 300)

Kamio and Thomas (1999) note that the usage of *it* and *that* in (48) is normal, but exceptional in (49). For a start, they indicate that the referents of *that*-pronouns are

⁸ Two things have to be noted. One is the relation with Declerck (1988), and the other is with the first type. The second type might be judged to be Unaccented-Anaphoric-Focus Cleft [it be old that new] in Declerck (1988) shown in (6b), since the Y of the second type is new. However, the stress seems not be inconsistent with the Unaccented-Anaphoric-Focus Cleft, since the X in (33) and (34) seems to have stress, when read aloud. If that is right, the second type might be judged to be Contrastive Cleft [it be new (with stress) that old], but the information structures are different. Then, after all, the second type is the same as the first type, since the speakers require the hearer to interpret new in Y as old in the second type. At the same time, the point that the hearers treat that as already known is the same. The difference lies in rhetoric or strategies in discourse.

incoming, and *it*-pronouns has been already known (c.f. foot note 6). In (48), the referent of *it* and *that* is the same, namely, *I just won the lottery*, but the time when the listener knows the event is not the same. The *that*-pronoun shows the time is shortly before or incoming, but the *it*-pronoun shows the time was long before or has already been known. Thus, the *it*-pronoun is not permitted in (48), since it is expected that the listener (B) first knows the event, *I just won the lottery!* in A's utterance, which corresponds to "incoming information", not "already known". However, the example in (49) exceptionally uses *it*-pronouns, since the referent of the *it*-pronoun corresponds to the incoming information. The speaker B in (49) first hears the event; *My dog was just bitten by a poisonous snake!* and *that*-pronouns are suitable, but the *it*-pronoun is used exceptionally. Toward this, Kamio and Thomas (1999) indicate that the exceptional *it*-pronoun is used for a particular kind of social accommodation. This point leads to the speaker's syntonic attitude, like *I really understand how you feel*. The speaker B utilizes the function of the *it*-pronoun to represent his syntonic attitude toward the sorrowful event to A. That is caused by treating the referent of "incoming" as "already known". The listener in (49B), namely (49A), is the person who actually experienced or saw the event and the information status of the referent is considered already known. Thus, the degree of the information status in memory is the same, i.e. already known. This information sharing by treating "incoming" as "already known" would project the syntonic attitude. However, the effect does not appear in the case of the *that*-pronoun, and the usage is inconsistent with the situation for the speaker to show his syntonic attitude. More of this can be observed in (50).

(50) A is attending a funeral, and approaches family members of the deceased to express his or her condolences.

A: a. It's tragic!

b. *That's tragic!

(Kamio and Thomas 1999: 301)

Generally when we go to a funeral and say some words to the family, the purpose of the utterance would express our syntonic attitudes, empathetic things like *I understand how you feel*, etc. Thus, the *that*-pronoun in (50) is not accepted, but the *it*-pronoun is permitted. What is important here is that the speaker's syntonic attitude appears, when the referent, which is not suitable as an already known, is referred to by *it*.

However, what happens when the listener do not know the event? In (49) and (50), the speaker treats incoming information as already known, and adjusts the already known information to the listener's already known information. As a result, information sharing as already known appears and the speaker represents his syntonic attitude. At the same time, the listener would feel comfortable through the information sharing. What happens without the listener's knowledge? That results in the obligatory interpretation of the speaker's syntonic attitude. In other words, the listener is required to interpret the referent as already known and also understand that the speaker adjusts the referent to the already known information in the listener's memory, even though the listener does not know the referent and there is no target of the adjusting. As a result, feelings of presumptuousness or snobbishness appears. This is

exemplified more clearly in (51), though it is not about pronouns. If you heard (51) from a man which you were not interested in, but he loves you very much, how would you feel? Most likely, you would feel that he is quite presumptuous and possibly be angry, since you think that there is no reason for him to freely decide your marriage.

(51) You have been destined to become my wife!

The speaker requires you to treat the information here as already known or decided and asks you to agree with that. He would like you to be syntonic with him, though the event is not decided at all. As a result, such bad feelings occur. The importance here lies in requiring the listener to interpret information as already known or determined. It requires a syntonic feeling, even if the event is not determined. Overall, this is too presumptuous. In cases which this is successful, the listener would accept the sentence without question. Therefore, the criteria of the acceptability related to this is how much the speaker is able to persuade the listener to be syntonic with him. At the same time, that is how much the readers understand the speaker's enthusiasm, or the feelings that the speaker wants the listener to be syntonic with.

Similarly, this happens in the [it be it that new information]-*it*-Cleft sentences. In (52) (which were also (32) and (4)) the writer is a researcher of anthropology and sociology and strongly writes his proposal. As a result, the readers understand that the author would like to persuade the readers by his proposal, and can see the syntonic attitude. However, the point is ambiguous in (53a) or (33) and causes the ambiguous acceptability. It is difficult to show the criteria about whether the speaker represents the syntonic attitude in the context, but it seem to be clear in (32) and not (33) that the speaker requires the reader to be syntonic with him. The criteria in detail are an issue in the future, but if I show one of the criteria, that is words or constructions used in the situation. The example in (53) demonstrates that.

(52) "It is the cultivation of this art that unfetters the body, strengthens it and makes it upright; it is it that gives a becoming deportment and an easy carriage, activity and agility, grace and dignity; it is it that opportunely awes petulance, softens and polishes savageness and rudeness, and animates a proper confidence; it is it which in teaching us to conquer ourselves, that we may be able to conquer others, imprints respect, and gives true valour, good nature and politeness; in fine, which makes a man fit for society:" = (33) & (4)

(53) a. ?Title: Red River Delta. Vietnam's history is linked closely with this Red River (or Sông Hồng). It is It that forged the Viet soul. It is It that has petrified the thick identity of the Vietnamese people.

b. ??Title: Red River Delta Vietnam's history is linked closely with this Red River (or Sông Hồng). It forged Vietnamese. It is It that has petrified the thick identity of the Vietnamese people.

(Brochure about Vietnam)

Again, the main point is whether or not the speaker persuades the readers to be syntonic with him, and also whether the listeners understand the speaker's syntonic attitude. Thus, it is predicted that there are many emphasizing words or constructions in the context and without them, like seen in (53), the sentence becomes difficult to understand and sometimes incorrect. One of the emphasizing words is *soul* and the emphasizing construction is the underlined *it*-Cleft sentence in (53a).

5 CONCLUSION

What I have shown in this papers is following.

- (54) The *it*-Cleft constuction [it be X that Y]
- (i) *it*-pronouns may stand in X.
 - (ii) X has to meet The Boundary Condition in (18), Elements in X must have boundaries in some sense to exclude other members.
 - (iii) The reason why *it*-pronouns are difficult to stand in X lies in the inconsistency between X and *it*-pronouns.
 - (iv) There are two types of [it be it that]-*it*-Cleft sentences.
 - (v) The conditions of the first type are (38).
The first type: [it be it that old information]-*it*-Cleft sentences are permitted when the relationship between X and Y is emphasized through the exhaustive meaning. Moreover, Y's information status has to be the same as *it*-pronouns. Of course, *it*-pronouns have to meet the function, in focus, and The Boundary Condition (shown in (18)).
 - (vi) The conditions of the second type are (53).
The second type:[it be it that new information]-*it*-Cleft sentences are related to known fact effects. In addition, the hearers have to interpret the speaker's syntonic attitude. Otherwise, the sentence would not be accepted. Of course, *it*-pronouns have to meet the function, in focus, and The Boundary Condition (shown in (18)).

I presented data that *it*-pronouns can stand in X, while antecedent studies note that *it*-pronouns can not be used there (Declerck (1988), Delin (1992a)). Then, it has been shown that there are many reasons related to the distribution, but the Boundary Condition related to the semantics excludes propositional *it*-pronouns in affirmative *it*-Cleft sentences. In addition, the boundary assigner makes some components acceptable. *It*-pronouns requires the referents to be in focus or uninformative, but X is informative in typical *it*-Cleft sentences. This is the reason why *it*-pronouns are difficult to be there. After that, I have differentiated [it be it that]-*it*-Cleft sentences into two types and analyzed them. The conditions of these are (v) and (vi), shown in (38) and in (47).

REFERENCES

- Ariel, Mira (1988) "Referring and Accessibility," *Journal of Linguistics* 24, 65–87.
- Ariel, Mira (1990) *Accessing Noun-Phrase Antecedents*, Routledge, London.
- Amano, Masachiyo (1976) "Bunretsubun no Shotenichi niokeru Hukushi (Adverbs in the Focus Position of Clefts)," *Eigogaku* 14, 66–80.
- Bolinger, Dwight L. (1977) *Meaning and Form*, Longman, London.
- Declerck, Renaat (1988) *Studies on Copular Sentences, Clefts and Pseudoclefts*, Foris, Holland.
- Delin, Judy (1992a) "Why Can't *it* be the Focus of an *it*-Cleft?," in Cahill Lynne and Richard Coates (eds.), *Sussex Papers in General and Computational Linguistics, Cognitive Science Research Paper CSRP 239*, University of Sussex, Brighton.
- Delin, Judy (1992b) "Properties of *It*-Cleft Presupposition," *Journal of Semantics* 9, 289–306.
- Delin, Judy and John Oberlander (1995) "Syntactic Constraints on Discourse Structure: the Case of *it*-Clefts," *Linguistics* 33, 465–500.
- É. Kiss, Katalin (1998) "Identificational Focus versus Information Focus," *Language* 74, 245–273.
- Emonds, Joseph E. (1976) *A Transformational Approach to English Syntax: Root, Structure-Preserving, and Local Transformations*, Academic Press, New York.
- Gundel, Janette K. (1988) "Universals of Topic-Comment Structure," in Michael Hammond et al. (eds.), *Studies in Syntactic Typology*, 209–239, John Benjamins, Amsterdam.
- Gundel, Jeanette K., Nancy Hedberg, and Ron Zacharski (1993) "Cognitive Status and the Form of Referring Expressions in Discourse," *Language* 69, 274–307.
- Hedberg, Nancy (1990) *The Discourse Function of Cleft Sentences in English*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.
- Hedberg, Nancy (2000) "The Referential Status of Clefts," *Language* 76, 891–920.
- Kamio, Akio and Margaret Tomas (1999) "Some Referential Properties of English *It* and *That*," in Akio Kamio and Ken-ichi Takami (eds.), *Function and Structure: In Honor of Susumu Kuno*, 289–315, John Benjamins, Amsterdam.
- Prince, Ellen (1978) "A Comparison of *Wh*-Clefts and *It*-Clefts in Discourse," *Language* 54, 883–906.
- Takahashi, Hidemitsu (2004) "Shijigo no Rikai: Eigo no *it* to *that* (Comprehension of Pronouns: *It* and *That* in English)," in Toshio Ohori (ed.), *Ninchi Comyunikeeshon Ron (Cognitive Communication Theory)*, 24–53, Taishukan, Tokyo.
- Yasui, Minoru (1978) *Atarashii Kikite no Bunpou (New Hearers' Grammar)*, Taishukan, Tokyo.

CORPORA

British National Corpus (BNC)
Web Corpus

Hiroki Shinohara
alocasia_odora@hotmail.com