17. Pragmatically marked structures

English employs special constituent orders and cleft constructions to convey pragmatically marked information such as contrast. Special constituent orders are treated briefly in section 4.1. In this section we will discuss clefts. There are two types of clefts in English. These we will refer to as it clefts and the one clefts.

17.1. It clefts

It clefts consist of a predicate nominal clause in which the subject is the inanimate pronoun it and the predicate noun is a full NP modified by a relative clause:

(153) IT COP NP REL CL

It is John who won.

INAN ser:NOPAS Juán quien ganar:PAS

'Fue Juán quien ganó.'

Notice that the subject pronoun functions as a 'dummy' subject; it does not refer to the head nominal of the relative clause. If it did, then in example 153 the subject would have to be he '3SG:MASC:NN'. In fact, this is ungrammatical:

(154) *He is John who won.

It clefts can be formed on any nominal that can be relativized (see section 16.1), regardless of it's role within the relative clause. The following are some further examples:

CLEFTEED OBJECT:

(155) It was the peasant-s who(-m) the soldiers-s threaten-ed.

INAN ser:PAS DEF campesino:PL quien(-NN) DEF soldado:PL amenazar:PAS

'Fueron los campesinos a quienes amenazaron los soldados.'

CLEFTEED LOCATIVE:

(156) It was under the house that the cat scurri-ed.

INAN ser:PAS debajo DEF casa REL DEF gato correr:PAS

'Fue debajo de la casa donde corrió el gato.'

CLEFTEED POSSESSOR:
Payne: a brief grammatical sketch of English

(157) It will be the man whose name is John.

INAN AUX:FUT ser DEF hombre de:quien nombre ser:NOPAS Juán
'Será el hombre de quien su nombre es Juán.'

17.2. The-one clefts

The second kind of cleft construction in English can be termed 'the-one' clefts. These clefts also consist of a predicate nominal and a relative clause. However, in this case the head noun of the relative clause is always the one 'singular' or the ones 'plural'. Also, the modified NP is the subject of the clause, and a full NP that is coreferential with the head is the predicate nominal:

(158) THE ONE[coref] REL CL COP NP[coref]

The one who came was John

DEF uno quien venir:PAS ser:PAS Juán

'El que vino fue Juán.'

Again, nominal in just about any role within a relative clause can be clefted:

CLEFTED OBJECT:

(159) The one-s who(-m) George despise-d were the Artesian-s.

DEF uno-PL quien(-NN) Jorge odiar:PAS ser:PAS DEF Artesiano-PL

'Los que Jorge odiaba eran los Artesianos.'

CLEFTED LOCATIVE:

(160) The one in which l live is nice.

DEF uno LOC cual 1SG vivir:NOPAS ser:NOPAS bueno

'Donde vivo es bueno.'

CLEFTED POSSESSOR:

(161) The one whose name l ca-n't remember is here.

DEF uno de:quien nombre 1SG poder-NEG recordar ser:NOPAS aquí

'El que no puedo recordar su nombre está aquí.'

Both it clefts and the one clefts are used in highly contrastive discourse contexts. For example, the following dialog illustrates a typical situation in which a cleft construction might function:
Payne: a brief grammatical sketch of English

(162)  A: Did Sally make the salad?
      AUX:PAS Saly hacer:NOPAS DEF ensalada
      '¿Hizo Saly la ensalada?'

      B: No. GEORGE made the salad. SALLY made the HAMburger-s.
      no Jorge hizo DEF ensalada Saly hizo DEF hamburguesa-PL
      'No. JORGE hizo la ensalada; SALY hizo las hamburGUESAS.'

      Contrastive stress on George, Sally and hamburgers indicates low level
      contrastiveness. Speaker B 'corrects' speaker A. This is followed by a further correction
      by speaker C:

      (163)  C: You're BOTH wrong. It was FRED who made the salad
      2-ser:NOPAS:PL ambos equivocado INAN ser:PAS Fred quien hizo DEF ensalada
      'Ambos se equivocan. Fue FRED quien hizo la ensalada.

      The fact that Fred is clefted by speaker C indicates a higher degree of
      contrastiveness. A the-one cleft would also be acceptable in this context. Prince (1978)
      provides a thorough treatment of it clefts, the-one clefts and other variations, including
      their functions in discourse.