The distribution of functional-pragmatic types of clefts in adverbial clauses¹

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Article appeared as:

Lahousse, K., Borremans, M. 2014. "The distribution of functional-pragmatic types of clefts in adverbial clauses". *Linguistics* 52: 3. 793–836.

Abstract

This paper presents the results of corpus research on the distribution of different functional-pragmatic types of *it*-clefts and *c'est*-clefts in English and French adverbial clauses. We distinguish between *narrowly contrastive clefts*, *broadly contrastive clefts* (or *new information focus clefts*) and *non-contrastive clefts*. We present the results of corpus research showing that, whereas the three types occur in *asserted* (or *peripheral*) adverbial clauses (typically causals), only narrowly contrastive clefts occur in *non-asserted* (or *central*) adverbial clauses (typically temporals). The distribution of the three functional-pragmatic types of clefts is explained on the basis of the interaction between information structure, epistemic modality and assertion.

1. Introduction

The subject of this article is the distribution of English *it*-clefts and French *c'est*-clefts in different types of adverbial clauses, as in the temporal *when*-clause in (1a) and the *parce que* 'because'-clause in (1b).²

- (1) a. *If these two policemen had not died, I can assure you this government would not have taken this action. That is the perception which the government has - it will only take action when they think the lives of whites are involved. Not **when** it is the lives of blacks that is involved. Blacks have been killed here for more than four years.*
(Cobuild)
- b. *Le proviseur lui dit: votre fille, madame, est la première en français. Ma mère ne dit rien, rien, pas contente **parce que** c'est pas ses fils qui sont les premiers en français.*

‘The head-master said to her: your daughter, Madam, is the top of her class in French. My mother didn’t say anything, she was not happy **because** it is not her sons who are top of their classes in French.’

(Frantext)

We adopt a comparative perspective, comparing English and French, because both cleft constructions and adverbial clauses in these languages have similar formal, semantic and informational properties (see Section 3 for more details).³ Hence, the observations and generalisations should be the same in English and French. Our data are relevant for the numerous works on *it*-clefts and *c’est*-clefts, in which attention has been given only to their distribution in main clauses. However, little is known about their actual functioning in embedded clauses.

In line with previous research, we argue in this paper that a fundamental distinction has to be made between three functional (i.e. information-structural) types of clefts. On the basis of qualitative corpus research, we show that only one type of clefts can occur in central (i.e. presupposed; non-asserted) adverbial clauses (e.g. temporals), whereas the three types of clefts are found in peripheral (i.e. asserted) adverbial clauses (e.g. causals). In order to account for this new descriptive generalization, we put forward the hypothesis that the information structure status of clefts interacts with the semantic properties of adverbial clauses, and that this interaction determines the specific distribution of the three functional types of clefts inside the two types of adverbial clauses.

The structure of the paper is as follows: we first present the two types of adverbial clauses (Section 2) and the three different functional types of clefts (Section 3). We then discuss the new descriptive generalization resulting from our corpus research (Section 4). In the last section we explain the observation (Section 5).

2. Two types of adverbial clauses

We adopt Haegeman’s (2009, 2010, 2012⁴) distinction between two types of adverbial clauses. ‘Central adverbial clauses’ (typically temporals, but also including for instance purpose clauses, see Lahousse 2010, 2011), are fully integrated in the host clause⁵ and interpreted as modifiers of the event expressed in the main clause, whereas ‘peripheral adverbial clauses’ (typically causals, but also including adversatives), are ‘less tightly connected’ to the main clause and provide the discourse frame for the proposition expressed in the host clause. Hence, central adverbial clauses, in contrast with peripherals, do not have

independent illocutionary potential and are integrated in the speech act conveyed by the main clause (see also Verstraete 2002, 2007).

Haegeman (2004) argues, in line with Hooper and Thompson (1973) (see also Verstraete 2007: 187), that conjunctions that can only express the event-time (*before*, *after*, *until*) always introduce a central adverbial clause, and that conjunctions that unambiguously express concession or reason/justification (*although*, *whereas*, *given that*) introduce a peripheral adverbial clause. Some conjunctions can also introduce adverbial clauses of both types. The conjunction *while*, for instance, can have a temporal meaning (2a) and introduces in this case a central adverbial clause, which is, in Verstraete's (2007) terminology, a case of "free/bound subordination", wherein the content of the adverbial clause is not "challengeable" (Givón 1983). The same conjunction can also have an adversative meaning and introduce a peripheral adverbial clause (2b). In such an instance of "modal subordination", "both the main clause and the secondary clause have a modal value, which implies that both propositions in the clause are open to challenge" (Verstraete 2007: 150).

- (2) a. *According to Smith, a group of Arkansas state troopers who worked for Clinton **while** he was governor wanted to go public with tales of Clinton's womanising.*
(*Guardian*, G2, 12.3.2, page 3, col 2-3; Haegeman 2004: 62)
- b. ***While** [Dr Williams'] support for women priests and gay partnerships might label him as liberal, this would be a misleading way of depicting his uncompromisingly orthodox espousal of Christian belief.*
(*Guardian*, 2.3.2, page 9, col 1-2; Haegeman 2004: 62)

The same holds for *when*, which introduces a central adverbial clause when it refers to the event-time, but a peripheral adverbial clause when it has a contrastive interpretation.

The distinction between central and peripheral adverbial clauses is confirmed by their different behaviour with respect to the distribution of a large number of independent (formal and other) properties, which concern both their external properties (i.e. as part of the complex sentence) and their internal properties. With respect to the former, Haegeman (2004) shows for instance that central, but not peripheral, adverbial clauses are in the scope of temporal, negative and interrogative operators in the main clause. With respect to the latter, she shows that peripheral, but not central, adverbial clauses can contain expressions of epistemic modality (3) (see also Verstraete 2002, 2007, and Section 5 below) and that "peripheral

adverbial clauses may and central adverbial clauses may not have their own questions tags associated with them” (Haegeman 2004: 73), as (4) illustrates:

- (3) a. Central adverbial clause (temporal)
*?? John works best **while** his children are probably/might be asleep.*
- b. Peripheral adverbial clause (adversative *while/whereas*)
*The ferry will be fairly cheap, **while/whereas** the plane may/will probably be too expensive.*
(Haegeman 2004: 71)
- (4) a. Central adverbial clause (temporal)
** Mary went back to college **after/before** her children had finished school, hadn't they?*
- b. Peripheral adverbial clause (adversative *while*)
*Bill took a degree at Oxford, **while** his daughter is studying at UCL, isn't she?*
(Haegeman 2004: 72-73)

Central adverbial clauses do not host main clause phenomena such as argument preposing (5a), in contrast with peripheral adverbial clauses (5b).

- (5) a. Central adverbial clause
** **While** this book Mary was writing this time last year, her children were staying with her mother.*
(Haegeman 2006a: 33)
- b. Peripheral adverbial clause
*I think we have more or less solved the problem for donkeys here, **because** those we haven't got, we know about.*
(Guardian, G2, 18.2.3, page 3, col 2; Haegeman 2007)

The distinction between central and peripheral will turn out to be relevant for the distribution of the different functional types of clefts which are presented in the next section.

3. Three functional types of *it*-clefts and *c'est*-clefts

Following Prince's (1978) seminal paper and Declerck's (1988) elaboration of it, fine-grained functional typologies of clefts have been proposed for English (Collins 1991; Delin and Oberlander 1995; Hedberg 2000) and also for French (e.g. Clech-Darbon et al. 1999; Katz 2000; Blanche-Benveniste 2006; Dufter 2008; Mertens 2011, etc.), which show the existence of several functional types of clefts. In this section we present the main types of *it*-clefts and *c'est*-clefts that have been distinguished in the literature (Sections 3.1 – 3.3), and, on the basis of this, we formulate some hypotheses (Section 3.4) that will be checked in our corpus research.

3.1. *Contrastive clefts*

The most prototypical instances of *it*-clefts are *contrastive clefts* (Declerck 1988: 220-221, see also Prince 1978; Higgins 1979; Heycock and Kroch 1999, 2002; Davidse 2000; Lambrecht 2001), as in the following examples:

- (6) a. *I asked her what was the matter with John and she answered that it was he who had been the victim of the robbery.*
b. *Nobody knows who killed the old man. The police seem to believe that it was a tramp who did it.*
(Declerck 1988: 221)
c. A. – *Who broke the window?*
B. – *It was John who did it.*
(Declerck 1988: 210)

Exactly the same type of cleft exists in French, where it has been called the *variable specifying C'est-cleft* (Katz 2000: 263), *narrow (or contrastive) focus clefts* (Clech-Darbon et al. 1999); *Type 1: focus/post-focus cleft sentences* (Rialland et al. 2002) and *focus-ground clefts* (Doetjes et al. 2004):

- (7) *Tu as vu ma voiture? C'est mon frère qui a fait ça.*
'Did you see my car? It's my brother who did that.'
(Katz 2000: 264)

In these clefts, the *wh*-clause provides given information, which is defined by Declerck (1988: 220) as “co-operatively assumable to be in the hearer’s consciousness at the time of utterance”; it corresponds to the background in Lambrecht’s (1994) terminology. The clefted element is narrowly focused⁶ and has an “implication of contrast”, to the extent that “the fact that a particular value is assigned to the variable automatically creates a contrast with all the other potential values that have not been selected. This implication of contrast is stronger according as the set of potential candidates is smaller (and is thus stronger when there are no more than two candidates)” (Declerck 1988: 226). Hence, this type of cleft is contrastive to the extent that the referent of the clefted element is the result of a choice between other referents that could potentially have been chosen instead of the referent of the clefted element.

In most works on focus in general, it is mentioned that the focus, being the most important element in the clause, has a contrastive interpretation. Given this relative importance of the focused constituent over other pieces of information, it is not surprising that some authors argue that every focus constituent has a contrastive function. For instance, under Gundel’s (1989: 298-303) view, “linguistic focusing (...) calls attention to the focused constituent, thereby invoking a ‘contrast set’ (...). Whenever information is predicated of some topic, it is inherently in contrast with everything else that might be predicated of that topic”. Note that this also seems to be Declerck’s (1988) opinion on focus in clefts, since he argues that “the fact that a particular value is assigned to the variable automatically creates a contrast with all the other potential values that have not been selected” (Declerck 1988: 226). Hence, for Declerck, all clefts with a focus (clefted element) – background (pseudo-relative clause) partition are contrastive, because the clefted element is chosen instead of all the other values that could have been chosen instead. In our opinion, however, there is a danger of eroding the concept of contrastiveness in this way, since every element of the clause could be considered contrastive: the mere fact that a speaker utters a word means it is chosen over any other word that the speaker could have used instead.⁷

In line with, among others, Dik et al. (1980), we argue that a distinction should be drawn between contrast in a broad sense, as what is “foregrounded” with respect to the “backgrounded” part of the clause, and contrast in a narrow sense, as “the more specific case in which one piece of information, say X, is explicitly or implicitly opposed to some other piece of information, say Y, which stands in some specific relation of opposition to X in the given setting” (Dik et al. 1980: 58).⁸ In *broad contrast*, the focused element is contrasted with an unrestricted set of other possible elements, while, in *narrow contrast*, the focus is

contrasted with a restricted set of other possible elements (not necessarily explicitly expressed in the clause).⁹

The difference between broad and narrow contrastive focus is illustrated by (8), which can be used as an answer in the context of either question (8a) or (8b):

(8) We went to the movies.

a. X: *Where did you go last night?*

Y: *We went to the movies.*

b. X: *Where did you go last night, to the movies or to the restaurant?*

Y: *We went to the movies.*

In the context (8a), X supposes that Y went somewhere, but does not know where. The context thus evokes an *unlimited* set of possible places where Y could have gone, and X asks Y to identify the relevant place. In answering, Y picks the relevant place out of all the possible places, i.e. Y identifies the value of the variable in X's question, as in the informal semantics:

(9) X: *To which place(*x*) did you go last night?*

Y: *We went to place(*x*), *x*= the movies.*

In contrast, in the context (8b), X supposes that there are only two places where Y could have gone, the movies or the restaurant, and asks Y which one of these two places they went to. Y is thus urged to choose one of the relevant places, and the place chosen is clearly in contrast with the other, given place:

(10) X: *Where did you go last night, to the movies or to the restaurant?*

Y: *We went to the movies (but not to the restaurant).*

In our view, it would be even more precise to state that, in this example (as in all examples with contrastive focus), Y is urged to choose between two propositions: "We went to the movies" and "We went to the restaurant". With his answer, Y then identifies the correct proposition and at the same time excludes the other.

Hence, when contrast is defined in a broad sense, there is a contrast in both answers in (8): *to the movies* is contrasted with all the possible places in (8a), and with *to the restaurant* in (8b). However, when contrast is defined in a narrow sense, there is only a real contrast in

(8b), since only in this example is the movies contrasted with a given, limited, set of other possible places. In section 4, we will show that the distinction between broad and narrow contrast in cleft sentences not only has an influence on the interpretation of the clefts, but also on their distribution, i.e. the specific type of adverbial clause they appear in.

3.2. *Non-contrastive clefts*

Besides the prototypical use of clefts presented in the previous section, there also exist *it*-clefts and *c'est*-clefts in which the clefted element provides given information, and the pseudo-relative clause does not present old or presupposed information, but rather the focus of the utterance, the new and most important information:¹⁰

- (11) a. A: – *But why is the topic so important?*
B: – *Apparently, it is the topic that enables the listener to compute the intended antecedents of each sentence in the paragraph.*
(Prince 1978: 902)
- b. *The leaders of the militant homophile movement in America generally have been young people. It was they who fought back during a violent police raid on a Greenwich Village bar in 1969...*
(Prince 1978: 211)
- c. *It was also during these centuries that a vast internal migration (...) from the south northwards took place...*
(Prince 1978: 898)

In (11a), A asks B to provide information about *the topic*, and B gives this information in the pseudo-relative clause of the cleft; the referent of the already mentioned NP *the topic* is clearly not the relevant and new information for A. In (11b), the clefted element *they* refers to the *young people* mentioned in the preceding context, and the pseudo-relative clause provides new information about them. The following examples also show that the pseudo-relative clause, and not the clefted element, provides the new, relevant information, and, hence, the information focus of the clause:

- (12) – *But why is everybody so interested in uranium?*
– *Because it is uranium that you need to produce atomic power.*

(Declerck 1988)

- (13) *he then went to the next school (...) er the moderate learning difficulties school (...) and for a start he was still having a lot of behaviour problems there and they wondered if he'd have to move on. And then it was them that said they thought he had autistic tendencies (...) And then we got help from the (...) autism outreach service.*
(Bicler and Davidse 2010: 266, attested example from Cobuild)

In French, the existence of similar *c'est*-clefts, with a clefted element that is anaphorically linked with the preceding discourse context and a pseudo-relative clause providing new information, has also been noted. Krötsch and Sabban (1990) call them *cohesive clefts* and Blanche-Benveniste (2006) calls them *clivées à effet de récapitulation* 'resuming clefts' in that they introduce a consequence of the preceding context or summarize the preceding context.¹¹

- (14) a. *En quarante-deux, les bombardements! Et c'est là que beaucoup de gens sont partis de Touon.*
'In 1942, the bombardments! That's when a lot of people left Touon.'
(Blanche-Benveniste 2006: 281)
- b. *Le Cécom est le distributeur de cette vidéo. C'est à lui qu'il faut s'adresser pour se la procurer.*
'Cécom is the distributor of this video. It's to them that one has to go to get it.'
(Doetjes et al. 2004: 535)
- c. *le pourcentage de popularité euh en définitive est la preuve qu'il y avait une majorité de Français qui étaient pour la modification de la loi ... à mon sens c'est ça qui est important »*
'The popularity percentage, euh, is in fact the proof that there was a majority of the French who were in favour of the law amendment... in my view, this is what matters.'
(Mertens 2011: 7, attested example in the Veil corpus)

As it appears from the examples, the clefted element in a non-contrastive cleft is normally “short and anaphoric” (Prince 1978: 899), an NP co-referential with an entity given in the preceding discourse, or a frame-setting adverbial (in what follows, we use the terms *anaphorically linked* or *anaphoric* to cover all these cases). Note however that such elements can also be contrasted and function as the clefted element of contrastive clefts, as is the case in (6a) above and in the next example:

- (15) *The mere fact of the death of a near acquaintance aroused, as usual, in all who heard of it the complacent feeling that “it is he who is dead and not I”.*
(Cobuild, cited in Bicler and Davidse 2010: 265-266)

The difference between contrastive clefts with an anaphoric clefted element and non-contrastive clefts, which standardly have an anaphoric clefted element, lies in the nature of the pseudo-relative clause: the pseudo-relative clause in a contrastive cleft provides given information, i.e. the background of the utterance, or what is given in the discourse context, whereas the pseudo-relative clause in a non-contrastive cleft contains the new information focus. Moreover, even if the clefted element can be anaphoric in both cases, it is clearly contrastive in contrastive clefts, but non-contrastive in non-contrastive clefts.

In written language the discourse context must be used to distinguish between these two types of clefts. In speech they are disambiguated by their prosodic properties: the anaphoric clefted element in contrastive clefts has a strong accent, also called a *HB contour* (Mertens 2012) and the pseudo-relative clause a *flat* or *reduced intonation*. The clefted element in non-contrastive clefts does not have this particular accentuation, and the pseudo-relative clause does not have a flat contour, but the same variety of accentuation types which are also possible in simple clauses (Clech-Darbon et al. 1999; Doetjes et al. 2004; Blanche-Benveniste 2006; Mertens 2006, 2008, 2011 and references cited there).

3.3. Conclusion

In this section we have shown that, besides prototypical contrastive clefts (whether they involve a broad or a narrow contrast), there also exist non-contrastive clefts, in which the clefted element is given, and the pseudo-relative clause contains the new information focus of the clause.¹² The properties of these three types of clefts are presented schematically as follows:

Table 1 - Properties of broadly contrastive, narrowly contrastive and non-contrastive clefts

	clefted element	pseudo-relative clause
broadly contrastive cleft	new information focus	given or predictable information in the discourse context
narrowly contrastive cleft	contrastive focus (restricted set of alternatives)	
non-contrastive cleft	(non-contrastive) given information (continuous topic, anaphoric element)	new information focus

In the linguistic literature on clefts, no attention has been given to the distribution of clefts in adverbial clauses either, and, as far as we can see, no corpus research has been done on this subject. In the next section we will show that the distribution of *it*-clefts and *c'est*-clefts in adverbial clauses is influenced by their specific functional type: all types of clefts are possible in peripheral adverbial clauses, whereas the distribution of clefts in central peripheral clauses is more restricted.

4. Corpus research: the distribution of clefts in adverbial clauses¹³

4.1. Methodology

4.1.1. *Corpora.* For both English and French, we conducted corpus research on data from formal and less formal registers. That is important because it has been shown before that in both languages, non-contrastive clefts are becoming more and more frequent (Dufter 2008; Bicler and Davidse 2010). Given that language change manifests itself above all in informal exchanges (Firth 1964; Halliday 1978; Hopper and Traugott 2003), these types of clefts are expected to occur above all in informal language.

For English, corpus research has been conducted on data drawn from the Bank of English, built up by Collins Cobuild. This corpus contains a variety of texts (textbooks, novels, newspaper, guides, magazines and websites) as well as spoken material (television

and radio broadcasts, meetings, interviews, discussions and conversations) in British, American, Australian and Canadian English. The data were extracted by means of the corpus access tool *jLookup*, which has the advantage of permitting the researcher not only to look at the immediate context but also at the article/conversation in which the cleft occurs. This is particularly interesting for the study of clefts in that a considerable part of the context is necessary to describe the use of these constructions. The query provided all the occurrences where the conjunctions are followed immediately by *it is*, *it's* or *it was*, followed themselves (with one to seven words between them) by *who* or *that*.

For French, we conducted corpus research on *Frantext*, a large online collection of French texts assembled by the *Institut National de la Langue Française* (www.frantext.fr). It represents about 3,500 literary and technical works from the 14th to 20th centuries, containing over a billion characters. The search was performed on all Frantext novels and essays published between 1980 and 2007, for a total of 87 texts, or 6,404,598 words. We used Frantext's own corpus access tool to retrieve the data. Since Frantext only contains formal language registers, we added data from the on-line discussion forum *Yahoo! Answers* (<http://answers.yahoo.com/>), where visitors can ask questions or answer questions submitted by others. Extracts of these data were compiled into a corpus by Hendrik De Smet (KU Leuven). The French part of the corpus contains data retrieved after 2006 and consists of 19,924 questions and 138,874 answers and contains 6,1 million words. The corpus is very rich, since questions can be about virtually any type of subject (science, politics, health, relationships, travelling, animals, etc.) and incorporate different types of genres (scientific texts, poetry, jokes, recipes, etc.). The major advantage of this corpus is that it contains very informal language, which is quite close to oral conversations. This explains why the examples reproduced below contain many incomplete sentences and numerous spelling mistakes, which we did not correct. The data have been retrieved by *WordSmith*. For each of the examples, we have access to a large context. This is particularly interesting for our study of clefts in that a considerable part of the context is necessary to describe the functional type of cleft we are dealing with. For both Frantext and the Yahoo corpus, the query provided all contexts in which a conjunctions followed immediately by *c'est*, *ce sont*, *c'était*, *ce n'est pas*, etc., is combined (with a variable number of words between them) with one of the relative pronouns *qui*, *que* or *qu'*.

It is important to stress that our qualitative analysis of the corpus data is more important than the quantitative results of our corpus research. Given the relatively low frequency of the phenomenon we are studying, statistical analyses are impossible. Moreover,

we are not so much interested in the relative frequency of the different types of clefts, but rather in the question whether or not all functional types of clefts occur in the two types of adverbial clauses, and if possible supplementary restrictions apply to them.

4.1.2. *Contextual indications.* After a manual check of the examples in order to eliminate cleft-lookalikes, we first analysed the preceding discourse context of each cleft, in order to determine whether the pseudo-relative clause provides information that is given (i.e. literally mentioned or highly predictable), or information that is new in the discourse context. This feature allows to distinguish between contrastive and non-contrastive clefts respectively (see Table 1). In (16) and (17), for instance, the content of the pseudo-relative clause is new information in the discourse context. This is particularly clear because the context following the cleft further specifies the content of the relative clause, and, hence, adds even more new information; in this example the new and relevant information is provided in a stepwise manner.

(16) Non-contrastive cleft

*Our problem is that we have too much culture and no political movement says Brother Wahad We need a movement that gives us some culture he added. We need to take the popular culture seriously **because** it is in the popular culture that we are taught to hate black women and respect all the negative characteristics of the materialistic society. It is in the popular culture that our children hear black women being referred to as 'bitchez'.*

(Cobuild)

(17) Non-contrastive cleft

*John Tilbury had to find work over which the vicar had no influence. For a time e boughth and sold fruit and vegetables in distant markets, and he saved every penny that he could. We know that he went as far as Bristol, **because** it was there that he met his future wife, who was a lady's maid. This was a very respectable occupation, where girls could learn how to behave in society.*

(Cobuild)

In the following examples, the content of the pseudo-relative clause is literally given (18) or implied (19-20), which makes these clefts contrastive clefts:

(18) Contrastive cleft

*Le proviseur lui dit: votre fille, madame, est la première en français. Ma mère ne dit rien, rien, pas contente **parce que** c'est pas ses fils qui sont les premiers en français*

‘The head-master said to her: your daughter, Madam, is the top of her class in French. My mother didn’t say anything, she was not happy because it is not her sons who are top of their classes in French.’

(Frantext)

(19) Contrastive cleft

*If we were to tell a patient that in other societies his perversion would not be a problem, that it is a problem here only **because** it is our society that is sick and produces constrictions and constraints, we would certainly be telling him at least a partial truth, but it would be of little help to him.*

(Cobuild)

(20) Contrastive cleft

When I start training I don't think I will feel pressure at all. To me the fee is irrelevant because it's what I do on the pitch that matters.

(Cobuild)

In the context (19), *being sick*, the content of the pseudo-relative clause, is under discussion by the fact that the preceding context is about a patient. In (20), the fact that something matters is predictable in a context where somebody first states that something is irrelevant.

For the contrastive clefts, we then determined whether or not the discourse context mentions or implies a restricted set the clefted element is part of. In some cases, the contrast set is mentioned literally in the preceding context (21a), in the clefted element itself (21b) or in the context immediately following the cleft (21c):

(21) Narrowly contrastive cleft

- a. *When I start training I don't think I will feel pressure at all. To me the fee is irrelevant **because** it's what I do on the pitch that matters.*
(Cobuild)
- b. *I've been working as a volunteer for Friends of the Earth since last August. My interest in environmental work was a result of studying geography. I'm on income support and I still live at home. This isn't as grim as it sounds **because** it is belief in what I'm doing rather than money that's motivating me at the moment.*
(Cobuild)
- c. *But also I have to accept that **when** it is your child that you're dealing with it's difficult when it's not your child (...) it's easier.*
(Cobuild)

In other examples, the restrictive set is not explicitly given in the context, but the presence of a focus particle such as *only* (22a) or the addition of elements such as *lui-même* 'himself' (22b), which have a function similar to that of focus particles,¹⁴ indicate that the referent is chosen out of a contextually restricted set of referents.

(22) Narrowly contrastive cleft

- a. *We aim some time in the future to achieve top levels of labour productivity and other indices of efficiency. These new guidelines require active co-operation with foreign partners, **because** it is only on the world market that we can prove the competitiveness and quality of our goods.*
(Cobuild)
- a' Contrast: the world market >< the national market
- b. A.–Arfff... *même dans le bouddhisme, la réponse reste non ! (...)* euthanasie, suicide, même réponse partout : non.
B.–*Dieu est certainement en faveur de l'euthanasie **quand** c'est lui-même qui la pratique, puisque c'est lui qui décidera de l'heure de ta mort...*
'A.–Arrf... even in buddhism, the answer is no! (...) euthanasia, suicide, same answer everywhere: no.

B.– God is certainly in favor of euthanasia **when** it is himself who does it, since it is him who will decide the hour of your death.

(corpus De Smet)

b'. Contrast: God >< humans¹⁵

In our corpus research, all examples we classified as a narrowly contrastive clefts have at least one of the contextual indications mentioned above. The other examples of contrastive clefts have been classified as broadly contrastive clefts, such as the next examples.

(23) Broadly contrastive cleft

*Il fourgue de l'héroïne pure... de la numéro 4. Cette nouvelle filière... on l'appelle la filière africaine. Pourquoi? **Parce que** c'est un Noir qui est derrière tout ça.*

'He traffics pure heroin... number 4. This new network... they call it the African network. Why? Because it is a Black who is behind all of that.'

(corpus De Smet)

In this example, the content of the pseudo-relative clause *est derrière tout ça* 'is behind all of that' refers to the heroin network, and is given information, whereas the referent of the clefted element *un Noir* 'a Black' is presented instead of anybody else that could have organized the network, and not as one person out of a restricted set of persons that could have done this. The same is true for the other instances we labeled as broadly contrastive clefts in our corpus research. The reader will indeed easily verify that in the next example, the content of the pseudo-relative clause is given in or at least inferable from the previous context, and that the referent of the CE is not taken out of a contextually restricted set of referents.

(24) Broadly contrastive cleft

My bones after the menopause; Getting to the heart of your problems. By Virginia Ironside.

A: – *Although I've been told by my doctor that my bones are beginning to deteriorate after the menopause, I'm reluctant to take the hormone replacement therapy he suggests. I've never liked the idea of taking pills and would prefer a natural remedy. Can you suggest something, Virginia says.*

B: – *Hormone replacement therapy isn't unnatural. That's why it's called 'replacement'. It's made naturally, and all it does is replace something you've been having all your life*

*up till now. It's not adding some new and creepy chemical to your system. I'll send you my leaflet on the menopause, which answers lots of questions on the subject, or you can ring my phone-line on HRT. But do decide quickly, **because** it's in the five years after the menopause that you lose most bone mass.*

(Cobuild)

In the next sections, more examples will be given, and we will explain in each case why we classified a cleft as an instance of one of the three types.

4.2. General survey of the data

The following tables show the number of clefts we found in our corpora in peripheral (Table 2) and in central adverbial clauses (Table 3). The second column gives the conjunction that introduces the adverbial clause, the third one the number of clefts found in this type of embedded clause, and the next columns mention the three types of clefts:¹⁶

Table 2 - Distribution of clefts in peripheral adverbial clauses

	Adverbial clause introduced by	Total number of clefts	Narrowly contrastive clefts	Broadly contrastive clefts	Non-contrastive clefts
English	<i>because</i> ¹⁷	74	18	14	42
	<i>when</i> (oppositive)	10	6	3	1
French	<i>parce que</i> 'because'	65	17	12	36
	<i>quand</i> 'when' (oppositive)	4	4	0	0

Table 3 - Distribution of clefts in central adverbial clauses

	Adverbial clause introduced by	Total number of clefts	Narrowly contrastive clefts	Broadly contrastive cleft	Non-contrastive clefts
English	<i>when</i> (temporal)	5	5	0	0
	<i>until</i>	5	5	0	0
	<i>before</i>	0	0	0	0
	<i>after</i>	0	0	0	0

French	<i>quand</i> ‘when’ (temporal)	29	29	0	0
	<i>lorsque</i> ‘when’ (temporal)	3	3	0	0
	<i>jusqu’à ce que</i> ‘until’	0	0	0	0
	<i>après que</i> ‘after’	0	0	0	0
	<i>pendant que</i> ‘while’ (temporal)	0	0	0	0
	<i>depuis que</i> ‘since’ (temporal)	0	0	0	0
	<i>avant que</i> ‘before’	0	0	0	0

Table 2 shows that peripheral adverbial clauses contain all three types of clefts. Table 3, in contrast, shows that several types of temporal (i.e. central) adverbial clauses do not contain any cleft, and, moreover, that, in those cases where clefts do appear, they all have a narrowly contrastive interpretation. In the next sections we give examples of clefts appearing in peripheral (Section 4.3.) and central (Section 4.4.) adverbial clauses.

4.3. *The distribution of it-clefts and c’est-clefts in peripheral adverbial clauses*

4.3.1. *In English.* All functional types of *it*-clefts are represented in the peripheral adverbial clauses introduced by *because*. In 32 of the 74 cases, the *it*-cleft is a contrastive cleft, in which the pseudo-relative clause represents given information. In some examples, there is a broad contrast. For instance, the male person in (25) (who is not given or mentioned in the previous context) is contrasted with other people that could have appointed the speaker.

- (25) A: – *I hope you won't think this is rude is that erm the fact that you're a woman. I mean it is quite unusual being a woman (...) to be in a position that you are. I mean (...) it does sound very rude to put it like that but I mean*
 B: – *No it doesn't. I understand what you're saying. (...) **Because** it was [name of a male person] that appointed me (...) as (...) Materials Manager and I have got a letter from him (...) congratulating me on the appointment (...) and saying that he had put me into a man's world. But he felt sure (...) that I could win through at the end of the day.*
 (Cobuild)

Note that this cleft is a contrastive cleft with a broad contrast: the content of the pseudo-relative clause is given in the previous context, and the clefted element implies 'and not somebody else'.

In other examples, the type of contrast that is involved is a narrow contrast, as in (26), where the clefted element *action by government* is clearly contrasted with the *words* and *the laws* mentioned in the previous context. Here too, the content of the pseudo-relative clause is clearly given in the previous context (indicated by the large underlined part), and the cleft is thus a clear case of contrastive cleft.

(26) *Similar concern was voiced by the environmental group Friends of the Earth. (...) Its spokesman, Andrew Lees, said that what mattered were deeds, not words. Many of the laws in Britain are pretty good on paper, but what's happened all too often is that those laws have not been brought into effect and even when they have been quite often they're not being effectively enforced. (...) So this is our message to Mr. Major: 'We're not going to watch your lips, so much as your footprints', **because** it is action by government that is the only guaranteed indication of its commitment to protect the environment.*

(Cobuild)

In some cases, the excluded alternative is given explicitly in the clefted element itself (27) or the narrowly contrasted clefted element is modified by an exclusive focus particle (28). Note that in both cases too, the content of the pseudo-relative clause is given in the preceding context (27) or at least predictable from it, as in (28), where the content of the pseudo-relative clause, the fact that some post offices are *affected*, is predictable from *the strike* mentioned in the previous context.

(27) *When Catherine's Life tells us that she nursed more out of zeal than compassion, contemporary readers are bound to recoil. Have we come this far only to find that our worst fears were well founded? that these individuals are essentially unnatural? 'Thou hast commanded me to love my neighbor,' says Catherine at one point, 'and I am unable to love anyone but thee, or to admit any partner with thee: how then shall I obey thee Life 104), and God replies: 'For the welfare of the neighbor thou shouldst do all*

*that is necessary for his soul and body. Such a love as this is sure to be without passion: **because** it is not in himself but in God that the neighbor should be loved.* (Cobuild)

(28) A: – *Er thank you first for the programme (...) it's grand. And er what I'd like to put on record is that our local er post office people are not going to strike. They're going to defy this strike ban (...) and continue to give us a good public service. And I think it's very commendable.*

B: – *Is this a local post office or a main post*

A: – *It's the the main the main one. (...) **Because** it's only the main ones that are affected I think isn't it?*

(Cobuild)

Besides these cases of a contrastive cleft, the corpus also contains 42 clear examples of a non-contrastive cleft, in which the clefted element does not have a contrastive interpretation, and in which the pseudo-relative clause presents the new information. In several instances, the clefted element is locative *there*. In some instances, the clefted NP literally repeats an element given in the context (29). In other cases, where the co-reference is not straightforward, the clefted element is a demonstrative NP, as in (30), where the *Stade Velodrome pitch*, Marseille's stadium, refers to the city of Marseille mentioned in the previous context.

(29) *Society takes part in the discussions, evaluations and elaboration of each of these decisions, and this ensures that they are better-founded and more in keeping with the needs of the people. Furthermore, collective work on a decision creates an atmosphere that is favourable to its implementation, **because** it is during discussions that people come to understand its importance and urgency, and discover the best way of implementing it. Sometimes practical steps are taken even before a decision is actually formalized. This ensures that a good decision is put into practice with maximum ease.*

(Cobuild)

(30) *Norway 0 Italy 1. Vieri rules as Italy march on Christian Vieri's fifth goal of the World Cup sent Italy into a possible quarter-final showdown with France. The 24-year-old striker is clearly out to win the prized Golden Boot award as the tournament's leading scorer. He powered away from the Norwegian defence in the 18th minute to keep up his record of scoring in every game. But the Italians were made to fight all the way here in*

*the baking heat of Marseille. Norway were returning to the scene of their greatest triumph **because** it was on this same Stade Velodrome pitch that they staged their marvellous comeback win over Brazil.*

(Cobuild)

Besides these instances of clefts in *because*-clauses, we also found 138 examples of clefts in *since*-clauses, of all types: contrastive clefts with a broad (31) and narrow contrast (32), and non-contrastive clefts (33). It is important to note that in all the examples we found, the *since*-clause expresses a causal, rather than a temporal relation. In other words, these adverbial clauses are peripheral clauses, rather than central ones.

- (31) (...) *the whole transaction?' 'It was eleven o'clock, Friday morning. I don't need to look it up. I remember because I'd opened the shop late and he was my first customer.' 'Friday?' Tansey was not surprised, **since** it was clearly not Oliver who had sold the jewellery to the pawnbroker.*

(Cobuild)

- (32) *Anna took another breath of the cool morning air and then rushed down the two long flights of stairs which brought her to the white-tiled kitchen. She would bring Johannes coffee in bed this morning, **since** it was she who was up first.*

(Cobuild)

- (33) (...) *his son Fath-Ali, who reigned until 1834. This prolific Shah became famous for his immensely long beard and enormous number of wives and children: he was survived by fifty-seven sons and forty-six daughters. Fath-Ali Shah played a vital role in the modern history of the Assassins, **since** it was he who formally recognized Khalilu'llah as head of the Isma'ilis in Persia. The new spiritual leader of the Isma'ilis was visited at Kahak by the French Consul-General at Aleppo, M. Rousseau, who travelled through the area in 1811.*

(Cobuild)

In 10 of the 15 cases, we found of a cleft introduced by *when*, the *when*-clause does not have a temporal (see Section 4.4.1. below), but rather a concessive, causal or adversative meaning, in which case it is not a central but a peripheral adverbial clause (see Section 2). Here too, the

corpus contains examples of broadly contrastive clefts (34), narrowly contrastive clefts (35), and a non-contrastive cleft (36):

- (34) *Woodchip stand branded illogical* By Matthew Horan. *The timber industry has branded Wayne Goss's plan oppose a Queensland woodchip export industry as `cynical" and not logical or economical". The Premier pledged on Wednesday that `Labor would not support woodchip export from our native forests". The Queensland Timber Board said any native woodchip exports could only come from forests the Government had already approved for felling as ecologically sustainable. Woodchips are a bad electoral word and I think Labor is trying to dodge it," board chairman Bill Brett said. It seems a little bit cynical and it's so arbitrary." He said Mr Goss's statement that Queensland's native forests were `too precious to woodchip was ridiculous **when** it was the Government who allowed the forests to be cut down.*

(Cobuild)

Contrast: the Government >< anybody else

- (35) *As early as 1985 Irving Scholar, the former Tottenham chairman, had advocated a super league, arguing that it didn't make sense for all 92 league clubs to share equally in the money that the BBC and ITV paid to screen football **when** it was the top clubs that really provided the incentive for advertisers. But by the time the TV rights contract came up for renegotiation in 1988, there was a new force to be reckoned with - satellite TV and particularly the now-defunct BSB.*

(Cobuild)

Contrast: top clubs >< other 92 league clubs

- (36) *Blur, more than anyone, perhaps even more than me, must be distressed at the column yards being devoted to Brett and his boys, **when** it was not so long ago that similar hyperbolic claims were being made for their own take on Britpop resurrection.*

(Cobuild)

4.3.2. *In French.* In our corpora, we found 65 instances of a *c'est-cleft* in an adverbial clause introduced by *parce que* 'because', among which there were contrastive clefts with a broad (37) and a narrow contrast (38), as well as non-contrastive clefts (39).

(37) A: – *Pourquoi les buts de football font-ils 7,32 mètres de large sur 2,44 mètres de haut?*

B: – **Parce que** ce sont les anglais qui ont fixé les dimensions, 8 yards sur 8 pieds

'A: – Why are football goals 7,32 meters long and 2,44 meters wide?

B: – **Because** it's the English who fixed the dimensions, 8 yards by 8 feet.'

(Corpus De Smet)

Contrast: English >< anybody else

(38) A: – *Choisir le sex du bébé!!! a ce c'est possible? j'ai entendu dire que le régime alimentaire de la femme avant la grossesse d'aide à 70% d'avoir un bébé du sex masculin ou féminin, a ce que c'est vrai?car j'ai tellement envie d'avoir plus tard une petite fille??*

B: – *Non, les regimes pour avoir une fille ou un garçon n existent pas tout simplement **parce que** ce sont les spermatozoides qui decident*

'A: – To choose the sex of the baby! Is it possible?

I heard that the diet of the woman before the pregnancy helps at 70% to have a male or female or baby, is that true? Because I so much want to have a little girl later??

B: – No, diets to have a girl or a boy do not exist simply **because** it is the spermatozoons that decide.'

(corpus De Smet)

Contrast: spermatozoons >< diet

(39) *C'est le désir qui mène à l'amour. Mais si on ne peut plus se passer de la satisfaction de ce désir sans entrer dans un état dépressif, c'est que ce désir est devenu besoin. On le voit constamment **parce que** c'est ainsi que se construit tout l'être humain. L'être humain est mû par un désir de parler alors qu'avant il ne savait pas (...)*

'It's desire that leads to love. But if one can't do without the fulfillment of that desire, unless getting into a depression, that means that the desire has become a need. A person feels it all the time, **because** it is in this way that every human being is built. The human being is moved by a desire to speak, whereas before, he was not aware...'

(Frantext)

In (37), the content of the pseudo-relative clause *qui ont fixé les dimensions* 'who fixed the dimensions' refers to the dimensions of the football goals mentioned in the context, and is given information, whereas the referent of the clefted element *les anglais [sic]* 'the English' is

contrasted with anyone else who could have fixed the dimensions. This is a clear case of broad contrast. In (38) too, the content of the pseudo-relative clause is implied in the previous context, which is about the factor that decides the sex of an embryo, and, hence, it is a contrastive cleft. The clefted element *les spermatozoides* ‘the spermatozoons’ is in contrast with the diet mentioned in the previous context; the type of contrast involved here is narrow contrast. The cleft in (39) is a non-contrastive cleft: the clefted element *ainsi* ‘so, in this way’ is anaphoric and refers to the whole preceding context, whereas the pseudo-relative clause provides the new, relevant information, which, in addition, is further elaborated in the subsequent discourse.

Moreover, in 4 of the 33 cases in our dataset where a *c’est*-cleft appears in a *quand* ‘when’ clause,¹⁸ this clause does not have a temporal, but rather an adversative or justificational interpretation.¹⁹ In all these cases, as in the examples (40-41), the cleft is a contrastive cleft with a narrow contrast.

- (40) *Marie est une gentille, mais bien souvent elle me gronde, **quand** c'est Nanet qu'il faut gronder.*

‘Marie is nice, but she tells me off very often, **when** it’s actually Nanet who should be told off.’

(Frantext)

Contrast: Nanet >< Marie

- (41) *J’ai méconnu le talent de mon propre arrière-grand-père, Xavier-Édouard Lejeune, employé de commerce et auteur d’une autobiographie dont j’ai mis dix ans à découvrir le vrai mode de lecture. Idiot que j’étais, je croyais qu’il ne savait pas écrire, **quand** c’était moi qui ne savais pas lire !*

‘I was not aware of the talent of my own great-grandfather, Xavier-Édouard Lejeune, a white-collar and author of an autobiography that took me ten years to find out how it should be read. I was such a fool, I thought he hadn’t known how to write, **while** it was me who didn’t know how to read!’

(Frantext)

Contrast: moi ‘I’ >< il ‘he’

Our corpus research thus shows that in peripheral adverbial clauses in English and French, all types of *it*-clefts can occur: contrastive clefts with a broad and a narrow contrast, as well as

non-contrastive clefts. In the next section, we will show that the distribution of *it*-clefts in central adverbial clauses is far more constraint, both in English (4.4.1.) and in French (4.4.2.).

4.4. *The distribution of it-clefts and c'est-clefts in central adverbial clauses*

4.4.1. *In English.* Since temporal clauses are prototypical instances of central adverbial clauses, we did corpus research in Cobuild on clauses introduced by temporal *when* (in which 5 cases of an *it*-cleft were found), *until* (5 cases) *before* (no cases) and *after* (no cases).²⁰

Given the relative frequency of adverbial *when*-clauses, the very low number of cases where an *it*-cleft occurs in a temporal *when*-clause is in itself an indication that the appearance of *it*-clefts in temporal adverbial clauses is highly constrained. Interestingly, the 5 examples of an *it*-cleft in a real temporal *when*-clause are all clear cases of a contrastive cleft with a narrow contrast. For instance, in (42), it is clear that the referent of the clefted element *her father* is in contrast with the mother, who is talking while she drives away from her family, rather than with all other potential persons that could pick up the girl. In (43) too, it is clear from the context that the referent of *the lives of blacks* is not contrasted with any other potential type of life, but with the *lives of whites* mentioned in the immediately preceding context.

- (42) [a mother is talking] *Will they talk to her in a caring tone of voice? Will she choke on her dinner? So many doubts and fears flooded through my mind as I drove away. I almost turned the car and went back for her a few times. Will she think I've abandoned her **when** it is her father who picks her up?*

(Cobuild)

Contrast: her father >< I

- (43) *If these two policemen had not died, I can assure you this government would not have taken this action. That is the perception which the government has - it will only take action when they think the lives of whites are involved. Not **when** it is the lives of blacks that is involved. Blacks have been killed here for more than four years*

(Cobuild)

Contrast: lives of blacks >< lives of whites

Similarly, in Cobuild, we found only 5 clefts in a clause introduced by *until*, which can have only a temporal interpretation and, hence, is always a central adverbial clause. In all five of them, the cleft is a contrastive cleft with a narrow contrast:

- (44) *Jackie and Bobby, and Lee by extension, spent a good deal of time together, she writes. When the moment came for Lee to return to London, Jackie began be more dependent on Bobby. That relationship evolved in her absence, **until** it was Bobby, and no longer Lee, who was Jackie's most intimate confidante. The final straw came when it was announced that Jackie would marry Onassis.*

(Cobuild)

- (45) *She could hear only occasional words of what was being said in the lounge. Mrs Norris, continuing shrill, talked at length at first. Connie came in more forcefully as things developed - **until** it was she who was doing all the talking.*

(Cobuild)

In example (46) the content of the pseudo-relative clause is not literally given but inferable, to the extent that the whole context preceding the example is about the way to investigate crimes in the French and British system. This cleft is narrowly contrastive: the general opinion we have about crimes in general (indicated in the context by *In Britain, we pride ourselves that*) is contrasted with the opinion we have after a crime is committed in our private life (*our house*). In this example, it is the possessive *our*, rather than the whole clefted element, that has a contrastive interpretation. The same holds for example (47), where the possessive in *your business* indicates a contrast with the description of business in general mentioned in the previous context.

- (46) *In Britain we pride ourselves that a man is innocent until proven guilty. And we prefer, we say, that 10 guilty men go free rather than one innocent man be found guilty. At any rate **until** it is our house that is burgled. In France they think it preferable that the investigating magistrate finds out who is guilty and says so. Both approaches have their merits, and in Britain there have always been enthusiastic advocates of the French inquisitorial system.*

(Cobuild)

(47) *Question marks are small-market-share businesses in high- growth industries. To grow they need cash. Some strategists call them “problem children.” If they become successful, they will become stars, and later, cash cows. If they fail, they either die or become dogs as their industries mature. Start-up biotechnology and nanotechnology firms such as Human Genome Sciences and Nanophase Technologies, respectively, fall into the question mark category. Expensive research has to be funded in the hope of producing a miracle drug. All this animal talk is fun **until** it is your business that the consultants label a dog. Dogs are not necessarily bad businesses. They just aren’t the type of businesses that large corporations want...*

(Cobuild)

4.4.2. *In French.* The results of our corpus research on French confirm that in central adverbial clauses only narrowly contrastive clefts occur, and not broadly contrastive and non-contrastive clefts. In our dataset from Frantext, we did not find a single *c’est*-cleft in central adverbial clauses introduced by the temporal conjunctions *pendant que* ‘while’, *après que* ‘after’, *depuis que* ‘since(temporal)’, *jusqu’à ce que* ‘until’ and *avant que* ‘before’. In the 29 cases where a *c’est*-cleft appears in a *quand*-clause with a temporal meaning, the cleft is always a contrastive cleft with a narrow contrast: the referent of the clefted element is presented as being part of an explicitly given restricted set of referents or indicates a subclass and is contrasted with other subclasses of a more general class.

For instance, the cleft in (48) appears in a context which is about who calls who in a relationship: the content of the pseudo-relative clause *qui appel* [sic] ‘who calls’ is clearly what is under discussion in the context, and literally given, and there is a clear contrast between the lady who is posting the question on the website and the partner she is talking about, and who is indicated by the pronouns *il* ‘he’ and *le* ‘him’:

(48) *Comment savoir s’il m’aime? notre relation dure depuis 3ans et je dois toujours le supplié avant de le voir. il m’appelle rarement et **quand** c’est moi qui appel [sic], il a du mal a décroché.*

‘How can I know if he loves me? We have a relationship since 3 years and I always have to beg before seeing him. He rarely calls me up, and **when** it is me who calls him up, he has difficulty to take up the phone.’

(Corpus De Smet)

Similarly, in (49), the content of the pseudo-relative clause *qui est très sûr de lui et qui te regarde de haut* ‘who are very self-assured and who look down on you’ refers to the *bêtises qu’on raconte sur l’allaitement* ‘stupidities that are told about breastfeeding’ in the previous context, and the *personnel médical* ‘medical staff’ is clearly contrasted with the *grand public* ‘the general public’ mentioned in the sentence preceding the adverbial clause:

- (49) *Au fil des semaines je suis devenue pro-allaitement donc je n'y vois que des avantages... Le plus dur, c'est de supporter toutes les bêtises qu'on raconte sur l'allaitement. Quand c'est le grand public, passe encore, mais quand c'est le personnel médical qui est très sûr de lui et qui te regarde de haut, j'enrage...*

‘I’ve become a pro-breastfeeding over the weeks, so I see nothing but advantages to it...What’s the most difficult, it’s to put up with all the stupidities that are told about breastfeeding. When this comes from non-professionals it’s still ok, but **when** it’s medical staff who are very self-assured and who look down on you, I become furious...’

(corpus De Smet)

In many cases the narrowly contrastive interpretation of these clefts in adverbial *quand* ‘when’-clauses is reinforced by an explicit lexical indication of the contrast, be it in the clefted element itself, the pseudo-relative clause or the preceding context. For instance, *de vrais* ‘real’ in (50) creates a contrast between real and false psychoanalysts, and the restrictive adjectival phrase in the clefted element *ses plus glorieux représentants* ‘its most glorious representatives’ in (51) indicates a sub-class of the general class of footballers mentioned in the previous sentence.²¹ In both sentences, there is a contrast between two sub-classes of one more general class, which are ordered on a scale: there is a contrast between one extreme of the scale (the best representatives of all footballers in (51) and real psychoanalysts in (50)) and the other values of the scale, which are excluded (see a.o. Erteschik-Shir 1997: 122 and Eckardt 2001 on contrast and scales).

- (50) *Mais ce n'est pas le corps qui est le plus important chez un être humain; ce qui le rend vivant, c'est la communication psychique à égalité de valeur entre celui qui lui parle et celui à qui il parle. C'est cela qu'a trouvé la psychanalyse, quand ce sont de vrais psychanalystes qui reçoivent l'enfant ou le jeune enfermé et angoissé. Il s'agit d'une résonance à tous les niveaux de réception et d'écoute, dans le langage verbal et le*

langage pré-verbal comme ceux du mime, du geste, des rythmes de la musique, la peinture, la sculpture.

‘But it is not the body that is the most important in a human being; what makes it alive, it’s a valuable mental communication, on an equal footing, between the one who speaks and the one to whom he speaks. This is what psychoanalysis discovered, **when** it’s real psychoanalysts who consult a closed, anxious child or youngster. What is in question, it’s a resonance on all levels of response and listening, in a verbal language, and in a preverbal one, as well as in languages of mime, gesture, rhythm, music, painting, sculpture.’

(Frantext)

- (51) *Plus tu fais de contrôles plus tu trouveras de cas de dopages. Le milieu cycliste a vite été pointé du doigt et à aussitôt fait son autocritique. Le tennis n'a pas encore été impliqué dans une véritable affaire de dopage organisé, au retrouve des cas par-ci par-là et en général il s'agit d'un dopage plutôt "grossier". Le football est épargné par le dopage...; aux yeux de la FIFA. Tant qu'on ferme les yeux c'est sûr qu'on ne voit rien. Le football a pris une telle ampleur qu'il est difficile de le remettre en question notamment **quand** ce sont ses plus glorieux représentants qui se retrouvent pointés du doigt (Juventus, Real Madrid...).*

‘The more controls you do, the more doping cases you will find. The cyclist world was quickly accused and it has immediately criticized itself. Tennis has not as yet been implicated in a real affaire of organized doping, one can find some cases here and there, and this mostly an ‘indelicate’ doping. Football has been spared by it, in the eyes of the FIFA. As long as you close your eyes, it’s certain that you don’t see anything. Football has grown as a sport so much that it is difficult to question it, in particular **when** it’s its most glorious representatives that happen to be accused (Juventus, Real Madrid...).’

(corpus De Smet)

Note that in both cases the content of the pseudo-relative clause is inferable from or given in the context. In (50), the whole context preceding the example is about psychoanalysts who try to help distressed children and adolescents. It is therefore unsurprising that they also *reçoivent le jeune enfermé et angoissé* ‘consult the closed, anxious child or youngster’. In (51), the verb phrase *pointé du doigt* ‘to be pointed an accusing finger at’ is literally given. Hence, these are real instances of narrow contrastive clefts.

In only 2 of the 29 examples of a *c'est*-cleft in a temporal *quand*-clause does the context at first sight not seem to indicate a restricted set of referents or sub-classes with which the referent of the clefted element is contrasted:

- (52) - *Vite alors, dit Killy, parce qu'on a encore du boulot, nous! Tiens, prends mon casque! Manivelle saute en selle, China démarre. -Me serre pas comme ça! crie China, j'aime pas qu'on me serre! - Je te serre pas, je m'accroche! Si t'étais derrière **quand** c'est toi qui conduis, tu deviendrais hétéro de peur!*

‘Hurry up then, said Killy, because we have still a lot to do! Here you are, take my helmet! Manivelle jumps on the motorbike, China pulls away. – Don’t hold me that tight! shouts China, I don’t like when somebody holds me tight! – I don’t hold you tight, I hold onto you! If you were behind **when** it is you who drives, you would become straight, just of fear!’

(corpus De Smet)

- (53) A: – *Comment faire pour surmonter sa peur? Au niveau de la circulation, dans la conduite.*

‘How can you overcome your fear? As far as traffic is concerned, while driving.’

B: – *je n'ai pas de solution car je suis dans ce cas, suite à un accident de la route ! en voiture, j'ai une trouille monstre, surtout quand ce n'est pas moi qui conduit!*

‘I don’t have a solution for that, because I’m in that situation, since I had a traffic accident. By car, I have a terrible fear, especially **when** it’s not me who is driving.’

(corpus De Smet)

However, one could argue that in (52) the person indicated by *toi* ‘you’, which refers to a person called *China*, is contrasted with the other persons mentioned in the immediately preceding context: *Killy* and *Manivelle*. In (53), the contrastive interpretation is reinforced by the presence of the negation in the clefted element and by the focus particle *surtout* ‘above all’ which precedes the *quand* ‘when’-clause. Coincidentally, the pseudo-relative clause is the same in both examples: in (52), this content is inferable from the context, which describes how Manivelle *saute en selle* ‘jumps into the back seat’ and China starts her motorcycle. In (53), the content of the pseudo-relative clause is literally given in the context.

Hence, in our corpus research into the distribution of clefts in temporal clauses in French, we did not find a single occurrence of a *c'est*-cleft *without* a narrow contrastive

meaning. The same holds for central adverbial clauses introduced by *pour que* ‘so that’ in Frantext, in which we found only three instances of clefts. The first two appear in the same excerpt (54), where the female person indicated by *elle* ‘she’ is clearly contrasted with the man indicated by *il* ‘he’ and *lui* ‘him’. Note that in both instances, the content of the pseudo-relative clause *accoure* ‘rushes to’ and *se jette dans ses bras* ‘throws herself in his arms’ is implied by the preceding context, in which it is announced that a man will disappear for eight days (and come back afterwards).

(54) (...) *la décision s'amenuise, se fait toute prudente - s'il disparaissait pendant huit jours ?- , (...) déjà le projet est chargé d'inquiétude : a-t-il bien mesuré les conséquences, calculé le risque ? Il n'est pas dupe : pourquoi huit jours ? **Pour que** ce soit elle qui accoure, lui fasse reproche de son éloignement, de son silence, de ses complications, de son fichu caractère, **pour que** ce soit elle qui se jette dans ses bras, pour que cela recommence, commence enfin, comme ces choses-là doivent commencer, dans l'émerveillement (...)*

‘The decision becomes very reserved, very cautious – what if he disappeared for eight days ? – (...) the plan itself is full of concerns: did he consider the consequences, calculate the risk ? He is not a fool: why eight days ? **So that** it is she who rushes to him, who criticizes his distance, his silence, his complications, his nasty character, **so that** it is she who throws herself into his arms, so that it begins all over again, begins at last, like these things ought to begin, in amazement (...)’

(Frantext)

The third example in the corpus is (55). This cleft is also a narrowly contrastive cleft: the content of the pseudo-relative clause is predictable, to the extent that it is indicated that the young lover does not do his job well (*ne fit pas mieux l'affaire* ‘did not do any better’), and the clefted element is contrastive, since *la troupe* ‘the troupe’ is contrasted with the director of the play (the person who is talking, indicated by *je* ‘I’), this contrast being reinforced by the presence of *elle-même* ‘herself’: it is *la troupe* and not the director of the play (who is speaking) who wants the actor to be replaced by another.

(55) *Est-ce la fille, Nicole Angel, ou son personnage angélique qui m'attira ? Toujours est-il que je trouvais son partenaire exécrable. J'en choisis un autre qui ne fit pas mieux l'affaire et je manoeuvrai assez habilement **pour que** ce soit la troupe elle-même qui me*

demande, quelques jours avant la représentation, de remplacer au pied levé le jeune amoureux.

‘Is it the girl, Nicole Angel, or her angelic character that I was attracted to? The fact remains that I found her partner to be dreadful. I chose another one who did not do any better, and I did it in a very skillful way, **so that** it was the troupe itself that asked me, couple of days before the performance, to replace, without any preparation, the young lover.’

(Frantext)

4.5. Generalization

The preceding data have shown that in French and in English, all types of clefts can occur in peripheral adverbial clauses (typically causals), whereas in central adverbial clauses (typically temporals), clefts can only occur if the clefted element is a narrowly contrastive focus; contrastive clefts with a broadly contrastive focus and non-contrastive clefts have not been found in central adverbial clauses. What distinguishes the latter two types of clefts from narrowly contrastive clefts, is that they involve a new information focus (rather than a contrastive focus), be it in the clefted element alone (in contrastive clefts with a broad contrast) or in the pseudo-relative clause (in non-contrastive clefts). Hence, the more general observation from our corpus research is that *it*-clefts and *c’est*-clefts which instantiate new information focus cannot occur in central adverbial clauses (i.e. integrated, presupposed, non-asserted adverbial clauses), in contrast with clefts with narrowly contrastive focus.²²

In the following section we try to explain why clefts conveying new information focus (in contrast with narrow contrastive focus) do not occur in central adverbial clauses. More specifically, we try to determine which property of central adverbial clauses explains this and how this property interacts with the discourse interpretation of *it*-clefts and *c’est*-clefts.

5. Explanation: interaction between semantics and information structure

5.1. Adverbial clauses and epistemic modality (EM)

In our opinion, one of the most important differences between peripheral and central adverbial clauses, and, more generally, between root-like (i.e. asserted) and non-root-like (i.e. non-asserted) clauses, i.e. between contexts where MCP can and cannot occur, is the fact that

epistemic modal markers such as *probably* and *perhaps* can occur in the former, but not in the latter (see Haegeman 2006; Verstraete 2007; Lahousse 2010 and references cited there; see also Section 2.2. above):

(56) Distribution of EM markers²³

a. Main clause

Mary probably read this book.

b. Complement clause of verbs like *to think*

John thinks that Mary probably read this book.

c. Peripheral adverbial clause (causal)

This situation is particularly ironic since Diana probably did a lot of charity with no concern for publicity whatsoever.

d. Complement clause of verbs like *to regret*

** John regrets that Mary probably read this book.*

e. Central adverbial clause

**While Mary was probably writing a book this time last year, her children stayed at her mother's place.*

Peripheral adverbial clauses thus contrast with central adverbial clauses in that the former, but not the latter, can contain epistemic modal markers. The function of epistemic modal markers is to indicate the degree of speaker commitment to the truth of the proposition. Consequently, a clause in which epistemic modal markers can occur is a clause with a truth value, a clause whose truth is asserted by the speaker on the basis of an epistemic evaluation. Kuroda (1992: 66), for instance, argues that “[a]ssertion is simply an expression of epistemic commitment”.

The relevance of the distinction between causal clauses, which do accept EM marking, and which encode, in the terminology we use here, an assertion, and other types of adverbial clauses, such as temporals, which do not accept EM marking, and which, hence, do not encode an assertion, is confirmed by Diessel and Hetterle (2011). In their cross-linguistic study on causals, these authors show that causal clauses are structurally more dependent of the main clauses than other (in casu temporal) clauses, which is explained by the communicative function of causal clauses, which, in conversation, function as “an independent assertion” (see example (37) above for a clear illustration of this).

Given this, the descriptive generalization in Section 4.5. above can be reformulated as follows: (i) in adverbial clauses *with assertion* all types of clefts can occur (i.e. with new

information focus and narrow contrastive focus), whereas (ii) in adverbial clauses *without assertion* clefts can only occur if the clefted element is a narrowly contrastive focus; clefts with new information focus (in the clefted element and/or the pseudo-relative clause) do not occur. In short, there can be no cleft with new information focus inside a non-assertive adverbial clause. Why is this so?

In any case it is clear that, for information-structural reasons, narrowly contrastive focus and new information focus are mutually exclusive inside one cleft construction. When the clefted element is a narrowly contrastive focus, it cannot at the same time be a (non-contrastive) new information focus, and a narrowly contrastive focused element can also not be combined with a pseudo-relative clause with new information, since narrowly contrastive foci are always contrasted with respect to given or backgrounded elements, not with respect to new elements.²⁴ Hence, when the clefted element is a narrowly contrastive focus, this automatically means that the whole cleft does not contain a new information focus. It must then be explained why new information focus cannot appear in a central adverbial clause, i.e. a clause where epistemic modal markers cannot occur, a clause without assertion, whereas contrastive focus can.

5.2. Assertion and new information focus versus narrowly contrastive focus

What is the distinctive property between new information focus and narrowly contrastive focus that explains their different interaction with assertion?

In many works considering the interaction between information structure and semantics, it is argued that the truth of a sentence is determined by evaluating the truth of the new information focus with respect to the topic (see Strawson 1964; Reinhart 1981; Chierchia 1992; Erteshik-Shir 1997, 1999).²⁵ In other words, a sentence is asserted with respect to the topic. Hence, the informal semantics of the broadly contrastive cleft in (57) is as in (57'): the cleft asserts about the victim of the robbery that its identity is John.

(57) Broadly contrastive cleft

[clefted element = new information focus, pseudo-relative clause = background]

- *Qui était la victime de l'attentat?*

'Who was the victim of the robbery?'

- *C'est Jean qui était la victime.*

'It's John who was the victim.'

(57') Assertion about x (x = the victim of the robbery): x was John

As for the noncontrastive cleft in (58), it asserts about uranium that it is needed to produce atomic power. This interpretation corresponds with the informal semantic representation in (58').

(58) Non-contrastive cleft

[clefted element = anaphoric, pseudo-relative clause contains new information focus]

- *But why is everybody so interested in uranium?*

- *Because it is uranium that you need to produce atomic power.*

(Declerck 1988)

(58') assertion about x (x = uranium): you need x to produce atomic power

What both cases (57) and (58) have in common, is (i) that the truth of (the denotatum of) one part of the clause is asserted with respect to (the truth of the denotatum of) another part of the clause, and (ii) that the result of the utterance of the sentence is that the common ground, and more precisely the information about the topic referent (i.e. the content of a card in the file card model of information structure, see Erteschik-Shir 1997, 2007) will be updated. In other words, in broadly contrastive focus clefts (57) and non-contrastive clefts (58), the linguistic material represented by the proposition suffices to update the common ground; it suffices to understand the assertion.

This, however, is not the case in narrowly contrastive focus. The informal semantics of a narrowly contrastive focus cleft such as (59) is given in (59'):

(59) Narrowly contrastive cleft

[clefted element = narrowly contrastive focus, pseudo-relative clause = background]

- *Who was the victim of the robbery, John or Paul?*

- *It was JOHN who was the victim.*

(59') (i) assertion about x (x = victim): x is John

(ii) x (x = victim) is NOT Paul

A question like the one in (59) does not merely instruct the hearer to update the content of the card representing the topic, but rather instructs the hearer (i) to choose one out of two propositions given (or implied) in the discourse context, one of which is true: ‘John was the victim’ and ‘Paul was the victim’ and (ii) to discard the other proposition (see Büring’s 2003 ‘superquestion’ for contrastive topics). Hence, a narrowly contrastive focus cleft does not involve assertion inside the proposition, but rather selection of a proposition out of a discourse-given set of propositions and exclusion of the other propositions which have not been chosen. In other words, part of the meaning of a narrowly contrastive cleft, and more specifically the contrast set (the contextually limited set of alternatives out of which the referent of the narrowly contrastive focus has been chosen and is contrasted with, see Section 3.1.), is not linguistically represented in the proposition itself, but only accessible through the discourse context.²⁶ It is in this sense that Erteshik-Shir (1997: 121) argues that “contrast is by definition metalinguistic”: in line with Horn (1985, 1989), who distinguishes between metalinguistic negation and regular negation, Erteshik-Shir (1997: 119) indeed proposes to “assume a separate metalinguistic level within which logical operators are used to predicate “ABOUT the object language rather than WITHIN it” (Horn 1985: 162). This metalinguistic component is, in Erteshik-Shir’s (1997: 123) view, pragmatic, in contrast with the “assessment with respect to truth values”, which is semantic.

Hence, in line with Erteshik-Shir, we argue that narrowly contrastive focus differs from new information focus in that the latter, but not the former, interacts with assertion (of the truth of the clause).²⁷ It is this distinctive property of narrowly contrastive and new information focus that explains their different distribution in adverbial clauses: the appearance of new information focus, i.e. the focus of the assertion, in central adverbial clauses, which do not have an assertion, leads to a mismatch, and it is this mismatch that explains why clefts conveying new information focus (be it in the clefted element, as in broadly contrastive focus clefts or in the pseudo-relative clause, as in non-contrastive focus clefts) do not appear in central adverbial clauses in our corpus. Narrowly contrastive focus, however, can appear in central adverbial clauses because this type of focus is not involved in assertion, at least not in the way we understand it here, as the evaluation of the truth of a sentence.

6. Conclusion

In this article we have described the distribution of clefts introduced by *c’est* in French and *it is* in English inside two types of adverbial clauses, and we have shown that the distribution is

dependent on the functional type of the cleft. On the basis of corpus research we have shown that in adverbial clauses without root properties (i.e. central or non-assertive adverbial clauses, e.g. temporals), only clefts with a narrowly contrastive clefted element occur. Clefts which do not involve narrowly contrastive focus but new information focus, be it in the clefted element itself or in the pseudo-relative clause, do not occur in this context.

We explained this on the basis of the relation between new information focus and assertion: what is asserted in a clause with new information focus is the validity of the focused element with respect to the rest of the clause. This is not the case in narrowly contrastive focus, where the validity of the whole proposition is asserted and where it is implied that another proposition (or several other propositions) is (are) not true. Hence, clefts conveying new information focus (be it in the clefted element, as in broadly contrastive focus clefts or in the pseudo-relative clause, as in non-contrastive focus clefts), do not occur in central non-root-like adverbial, because there is a mismatch between the specific type of context, which does not involve assertion, and the type of focus occurring in it, which does involve assertion.

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¹ Karen Lahousse is first (main) author of this paper, Marijke Borremans is co-author. We are very grateful to Hendrik De Smet for sharing his corpus and to Kristin Davidse and two anonymous reviewers of *Linguistics* for comments on an earlier version of this paper. All errors remain ours.

² Throughout the whole text, conjunctions will be put in bold and clefted elements will be underlined.

³ Although Katz (2000) mentions that the distribution of *c'est*-clefts in French and *it*-clefts in English is not always the same, we consider them on a par, since the reported differences can be explained by general

properties of the languages under consideration (a.o. presence of pitch accent in English, but not in French) and not of the cleft-constructions themselves.

⁴ See also Haegeman (2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2007). For some earlier work in the same spirit, but which does not mention the terms of central and peripheral adverbial clauses, see Haegeman (1991, 1984a, 1984b, 1984c) and Haegeman and Wekker (1984).

⁵ According to Verstraete (2002, 2007), this ‘integration’ has to be understood in terms of interpersonal operators.

⁶ The clefted element in this type of cleft corresponds with the narrow argument focus in Lambrecht’s (1994) relational dimension of information structure: it may (6a) or may not (6b) refer to a referent mentioned in the context or supposed to be known by the addressee (6c-7), but “represents ‘new’ information in the sense that the NP has not yet been specified as value for the variable in the preceding context” (Declerck 1988).

⁷ See also Bolinger (1961: 87): “in a broad sense every semantic peak is contrastive (...) as the alternatives are narrowed down, we get closer to what we think of as contrastive accent”.

⁸ Other authors too have drawn attention to the difference between broad and narrow contrast. According to Dretske (1972: 411–412) (thanks to Manfred Krifka for drawing my attention to this paper), “contrastive statements constitute a special class, not in virtue of the fact that in making these statements we contrast one state of affairs with another. For, in a sense, all (contingent) statements do this (...). What distinguishes contrastive statements is that they embody a dominant contrast, a contrastive focus, a featured exclusion of certain possibilities”. Chafe (1976: 34) also argues that “(...) the speaker assumes that a limited number of candidates is available in the addressee’s mind (whether or not the addressee could in fact list all of them). Often the number is one, often it is larger, but when it is unlimited the sentence fails to be contrastive”. Krifka (2007) too, who argues that “Focus in general indicates the presence of alternatives for interpretation”, distinguishes between closed focus (which we call narrow contrast) and open focus (broad contrast). The former appears in the cases where the contextual set of alternatives “is limited to a few items, perhaps down to the minimal number of two, the item in focus and one alternative.” In the latter type of contrast, “the set is unrestricted, satisfying just the general condition that all the alternatives must be compatible with the focus in their semantic type.” The difference between broad and narrow focus corresponds with the difference between new information focus and contrastive focus.

⁹ Contrastive focus in this sense is referred to in the linguistic literature as *contrastive focus*, *identificational focus*, *alternatives focus*, or simply *focus* (Jackendoff 1972; Jacobs 1999; Krifka 1992; Rooth 1992; Erteschik-Shir 1997, 2007; Kiss 1998; Kratzer 2004). See also Belletti (in press), who distinguishes between clefts in which the clefted element is “interpreted as the focus of new information” and those in which the clefted element has a “contrastive/corrective focus interpretation”.

¹⁰ Declerck (1988) calls them *unaccented-anaphoric-focus clefts*. In our view, this terminology is however problematic. The term *unaccented* is not appropriate from a prosodic point of view: what distinguishes non-contrastive clefts from contrastive clefts is not the lack of an accent on the clefted element, but rather the fact that in the former, but not in the latter, the pseudo-relative clause can have accents (see Mertens 2006, 2008, 2011). Moreover, although the term *anaphoric* is not clearly defined in Declerck (1988), it seems that the author means that the referent has to be given in or be recoverable from the preceding discourse context. This term too is problematic since the clefted element in a contrastive cleft can also be anaphoric, as in (6a).

¹¹ Because the clefted element is a continuous topic, this type of cleft cannot be used as a discourse-opener. Instead, it seems that this type of cleft is used to reinforce discourse cohesion, as in (ia), since the unclefted counterpart in the same context would have resulted in a less natural (because less cohesive) discourse stretch, as (ib) shows.

- (i) *However, it turns out that there is rather interesting independent evidence for this rule, ...*
a. *... and it is to that evidence that we must now turn.*
(Prince 1978: 902)
b. *... and we must now turn to that evidence.*
(Declerck 1988: 230)

¹² Declerck (1988: 220) identifies a separate type of *discontinuous clefts*, wherein the clefted element does not provide contrastive information and is also not anaphoric. In these clefts, all the material is focal: they are all-new.

- (i) a. *It was just about 50 years ago that Henry Ford gave us the week-end.*
(Prince 1978: 898)
b. *It is through the writings of Basil Bernstein that many social scientists have become aware of the scientific potential of sociolinguistics.*
(Declerck 1988: 220)

Similar types of clefts can be found in French; their existence is mentioned in Doetjes et al. (2004), and they are called *factual c’est-clefts* by Katz (2000) (similar examples can be found in Lehmann 2008).

- (ii) a. *C’est avec plaisir que je vous invite à participer à ce séminaire.*

'It is with pleasure that I invite you to this seminar'

(Doetjes et al. 2004: 535)

- b. *C'est en 1900, à la Belle Epoque, en plein Art Nouveau que Rodin dévoile sa fameuse "Porte d'Enfer".*

'It was in 1900, during the Belle Epoque, in the New Art period that Rodin unveiled his famous "Door of Hell".'

(Katz 2000: 270)

Discontinuous clefts have in common with unaccented-anaphoric-focus clefts (non-contrastive clefts in our terminology) that they "do not explicitly establish a variable, and may therefore easily be emphasizing rather than identifying (specificational)" (Declerck 1988: 238). Given this, it is not surprising that some authors conflate these two categories into one: according to Prince (1978) they constitute together the category of *informative-presupposition it-clefts* and Doetjes et al. (2004) consider them both to be instances of *broad focus clefts*. Because of this, and because we didn't find examples of unambiguous discontinuous clefts in our corpus research, we will not consider them in what follows.

¹³ See Sleeman (2012) on the distribution of other focusing devices in adverbial clauses.

¹⁴ See Nølke (1983, 1993), Horn (1969), Jackendoff (1972), Rooth (1985), and König (1991), to mention just a few authors who worked on such elements.

¹⁵ Note that euthanasia and suicide are committed by humans, and the cleft speaks explicitly about euthanasia committed by God.

¹⁶ For practical reasons, it is impossible to compare the frequency of clefts inside different types of adverbial clauses. For instance, our French corpora contain 6866 instances of *parce que* 'because' and 19.071 instances of *quand* 'when'. The corpora contain 29 instances of clefts in a *quand* clause, and also 29 instances of a cleft in a *parce que* clause. However, in order to compare the frequency of clefts in both types of adverbial clauses, one should exclude from the examples with *quand* all instances where *quand* is interrogative or has an oppositive rather than a temporal meaning, and, hence, are no cases of central adverbial clauses. This is beyond the scope of this paper.

¹⁷ In 3 of the 42 instances of non-contrastive *it*-cleft in an adverbial clause introduced by *because*, the cleft seems to be a discontinuous cleft (Declerck 1988):

- (i) *Religious groups, as a bloc, are expected to do well this election and there will be a fair number of former parliamentarians from the old merchant elite. Mary Ann Tetraux sp a Kuwait scholar at Old Dominion University, who's here to observe the elections, says she expects many of the new faces to do well, but maybe not well enough. Mary Ann Tetraux (Old Dominion University) Will there be enough of them to make a difference? And even if there are, will be they be willing to submerge their individuality, really important for a Kuwaiti, and maybe even sacrifice parts of their own agendas for some jointly conceived vision of a common good, which they don't even have yet? And even--what if they are, **because** it's (still) the ruling family that appoints the government and if we get hacks and incompetence and yes-men, business as usually basically, then even with a wonderful parliament, it could be 1986 all over again.*
(Cobuild)

- (ii) *After all, it is the child we are treating, not the parents and our guilt about children dying Some would say such life-or-death decisions are best taken individually and in private with doctors, the patient and the family trying to reach agreement. But Dr Nathason disagrees. If we accept there are children who don't get treatment for leukaemia, we have to take responsibility for that collectively **because** it is our taxes that fund the health service. But we have to be explicit about it. It may be better to spend £ 75,000 to treat a lot more people - to give them more quality and quantity of life than one child with leukaemia The logic of the argument is persuasive. The problem is the patient will always be someone's son or daughter, mother or father, husband, wife or best friend.*

(Cobuild)

Note however that, as we mentioned above, it is sometimes hard to distinguish between a discontinuous cleft or a non-contrastive cleft, especially when the cleft does not appear discourse-initially, as in the case in the two examples above. In both examples, the content of the pseudo-relative clause is new in the discourse context, which is clearly not about who appoints the government (in i) and who is funding the health service (in ii).

¹⁸ Just as in English, we found two cases where the *quand*-clause functions as a complement clause rather than an adverbial clause, as (i). These have not been included in our analysis:

- (i) *Bon en fait, c'est comme en voiture, je préfère **quand** c'est moi qui conduit.*

'Well, in fact, it's like in a car, I prefer **when** it is me who's driving.'

(corpus De Smet)

¹⁹ Note that in all these examples, the *quand*-clause is separated from the main clause by means of commas. This is not a coincidence, as peripheral adverbial clauses are not integrated in the main clause, neither from a syntactic nor a semantic point of view (cf. section 2.1.).

²⁰ We also found two examples in which the *when*-clause is functioning as a complement clause, as in (i). Since we concentrate in this paper on *it*-clefts in adverbial clauses, we did not include these examples in our results.

- (i) *How do car owners know **when** it is their alarm that is ringing? With difficulty, it would seem, judging by the time it takes to switch them off.*
(Cobuild)

²¹ In this example, the focus particle *notamment* ‘in particular’ even reinforces this contrastive interpretation. Note that the focus particle in this example precedes the whole adverbial clause, but scopes over the clefted element alone. This is fully in line with the observation that the content of the pseudo-relative clause is fully given, i.e. non focal, to the extent that focus particles associate with focus (see a.o. Nølle 1983; Rooth 1992 etc.).

²² See Lahousse, Laenzlinger and Soare (2014) on the role of contrast in clefts and argument preposing.

²³ All these examples have to be read with a neutral stress pattern, because the presence of strong (contrastive) accent in a clause can interfere with the distribution of epistemic modal markers.

²⁴ At first sight, the following example seems to be evidence against the claim that a narrowly contrastive focused clefted element is incompatible with a new information focus in the pseudo-relative clause. According to Collins (1991), who mentions this example, it displays a contrastive (in his terms ‘highlighted’) clefted element in combination with a new pseudo-relative clause:

- (i) *Last year Mexico suffered a number of major catastrophes. In September the country’s capital was struck by an earthquake that reduced hundreds of buildings to rubble and killed thousands of people. It is this catastrophe that will undoubtedly go on record as one of the worst suffered by any country in 1985.*
(Collins 1991: 114)

About this example, Collins (1991: 115) says that “the highlighted element, *this catastrophe*, is contrasted with *a number of major catastrophes*, and the content of its pseudo-relative clause freshly new.” This example is however not contrastive in the sense that we use this term in this paper: in this context the clefted element anaphorically refers to *an earthquake that reduced hundreds of buildings to rubble and killed thousands of people* in the previous sentence (which is itself presented as one example of the *number of major catastrophes* introduced in the first sentence of the paragraph). The cleft in (i) implies no contrast between this particular catastrophe and another restricted set of catastrophes that could also potentially go on record as one of the worst suffered by any country in 1985. Instead, it is a clear case of noncontrastive cleft, where the clefted element *this catastrophe* anaphorically refers to the earthquake mentioned in the previous context, whereas the content of the pseudo-relative clause is the new information focus of the clause, which is asserted about the catastrophe.

²⁵ Lambrecht (1994) does not relate topics to truth value assignment; in his view, topic is a purely pragmatic relation. See however Erteschik-Shir (1997, 2007) for many convincing empirical and theoretical arguments in favor of her account, which Lambrecht’s framework cannot explain. Assertion in the way we understand it here corresponds with *Predication* in Erteschik-Shir’s (1997, 2007) terminology, which is “a relation between the “topic” of a sentence and its predicate”. The author indeed explicitly argues to “follow Strawson (1964) in saying that predication is an assessment for truth value of the predicate with respect to the Topic, i.e. “the statement is assessed as putative information about its topic”.” (Erteschik-Shir 1997: 15). Note that in Erteschik-Shir’s (1997, 2007) terminology, the predicate corresponds to the whole sentence except for the topic.

²⁶ The contrast set is represented in Erteschik-Shir’s (1997, 2007) *f-structure* (*Focus Structure*, a formal way to represent the information structure of a proposition on the basis of its syntactic structure, and which is interpreted by both the semantic and the pragmatic component) by a “subordinate f-structure”, which is absent from the f-structure of clauses with new information focus.

²⁷ Note that purely pragmatic views on information structure, which do not consider the influence of information structural entities such as topic and focus on the truth values of the clause, do not distinguish contrastive focus from new information focus in the way we argue for here, and, hence, do not provide a straightforward way to account for the descriptive generalization in section 4. For instance, in Givón’s (2001: 221) view, “every contrastive focus is also the focus of assertion, but not vice versa”. Also, Lambrecht (1994: 290-291) does not consider new information focus and contrastive focus as two distinct categories, because they are “formally indistinguishable”. He indeed argues that “contrastiveness, unlike focus, is not a category of grammar” (Lambrecht 1994: 291). In this sense, the author’s account is radically different from Erteschik-Shir’s, where information focus and (narrowly contrastive) focus are represented in a different way (cf. footnote 36). However, both accounts have in common that they consider contrastive focus to be the result of inferences on the basis of the discourse: Lambrecht (1994: 290-291) argues that “the impression of contrastiveness (...) arises from particular inferences which we draw on the basis of given conversational contexts” and Erteschik-Shir (1997: 123) holds that the sets that is involved in the interpretation of contrastive focus “cannot be derived directly from context. Inferences must be made as to which type of set is involved”.