

Reconsiderations of WH- and iWH-Clefts

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1. Introduction

There are three types of cleft sentences in English as in (1)

- (1) a. It was Ronald that gave me a hamburger.
- b. What Ronald gave me was a hamburger.
- c. This was what Ronald gave me.

We call the clefts as in (1a) *it*-clefts, (1b) WH-clefts, and (1c) inverted WH-clefts (hereafter iWH-clefts). Takashima (1996) has made a prediction to the effect that iWH-clefts appear somewhere near the end of the discourse. The aim of this paper is to test this prediction, present a newly discovered fact about iWH-clefts, and discuss the results.

2. Predictions of Takashima (1996)

Jones and Jones (1985) investigated the function of WH-clefts in a natural discourse context. As a result they state that the dominant function of WH-clefts is marking the theme of the text and that the scope of the theme may range from just a small portion to the entire text (Jones and Jones, 1985:6). As regards the position of the theme in the discourse, they say that writers and speakers of English not infrequently announce the theme somewhere near the beginning of the discourse (Jones and Jones, 1985:3). Takashima (1996) predicts on the basis of the statements in Jones and Jones (1985) and some examinations of iWH-clefts in the actual discourse that one of the functions of iWH-clefts is (re)establishing the theme of the discourse and that the scope of the theme may range from just a small portion to the entire discourse, as in WH-clefts. Another prediction is that they tend to appear near the end of the discourse unit. In this paper we will pay attention to the latter prediction.

3. Examinations of the Prediction in Takashima (1996)

Now let us test the prediction concerning the position of iWH-clefts in the discourse. Takashima (1995) has shown the frequency of *it*-clefts, WH-clefts, and iWH-clefts in his corpora according to the category of Filler¹ as follows:

(2)

	ADV	PP	NP	S	PRO	INF	GER	REL	AP
it-clefts	122	304	250	2	10	0	0	0	0
WH-clefts	0	0	553	358	12	81	17	0	0
iWH-clefts	0	0	155	0	284	3	12	32	1

In examining the positions of iWH-clefts in discourse, we will confine ourselves to the examples of which the filler are PRO, and examples from LITERATURE corpus.^{2,3}

From this examination, we have found that many iWH-clefts appear near the end of the discourse, but at the same time, many of them appear near the beginning. Only some of the latter, which are counter-examples to the prediction by Takashima (1995), are shown below:

- (3) a. {CHAPTER 4: paragraph 35} "There's roast mutton and suet-pudding waiting for you!" says I.

"Go in to dinner directly.

*This is what comes Rosanna, of thinking on an empty stomach!*⁴" I spoke severely, being naturally indignant (at my time of life) to hear a young woman of five-and-twenty talking about her latter end! She didn't seem to hear me: she put her hand on my shoulder, and kept me where I was, sitting by her side.

"I think the place has laid a spell on me," she said.

.....

"Betteredged!" cries the voice, "where are you?" "Here!" I shouted out in return, without a notion in my mind of who it was.

Rosanna started to her feet, and stood looking towards the voice.

I was just thinking of getting on my own legs next, when I was staggered by

a sudden change in the girl's face.

{CHAPTER 4: paragraph 40} (*The Moonstone* by Collins Wilkie, 1868)

- b. {paragraph 25} "Yes, I have got it now," he answered with his thick red finger planted halfway down the column.

"Here it is. ***This is what began it all.***

You just read it for yourself, sir."

I took the paper from him and read as follows: - To The Red-Headed League: On account of the bequest of the late Ezekiah Hopkins, of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., there is now another vacancy open which entitles a member of the League to a salary of L4 a week for purely nominal services.

All red-headed men who are sound in body and mind, and above the age of twenty-one years, are eligible.

Apply in person on Monday, at eleven o'clock, to Duncan Ross, at the offices of the League, 7 Pope's Court, Fleet Street.

{paragraph 30} (*The Red-Headed League* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1891)

- c. {paragraph 80} "But the money, Mr.Holmes, the money!" "Well, yes, of course the pay is good-too good.

That is what makes me uneasy.

Why should they give you L120 a year, when they could have their pick for L40? There must be some strong reason behind."

"I thought that if I told you the circumstances you would understand afterwards if I wanted your help.

I should feel so much stronger if I felt that you were at the back of me."

"Oh, you may carry that feeling away with you.

I assure you that your little problem promises to be the most interesting which has come my way for some months.

There is something distinctly novel about some of the features.

If you should find yourself in doubt or in danger-" "Danger! What danger do you foresee?" {paragraph 85} (*The Adventure of the Copper Beeches* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1892)

- d. {paragraph 205} "They will take what comes to them.

That is what they are paid for.

I shall not appear in the matter."

"Unless I bring you into it."

"No, no, you would not.

You are a gentleman.

It is a woman's secret."

"In the first place, you must give back this manuscript."

She broke into a ripple of laughter and walked to the fireplace.

There was a calcined mass which she broke up with the poker.

"Shall I give this back?" she asked.

So roguish and exquisite did she look as she stood before us with a challenging smile, that I felt of all Holmes's criminals this was the one whom he would find it hardest to face.

However, he was immune from sentiment.

{paragraph 210} (*The Adventure of the Three Gables* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1926)

The above examples show that the prediction by Takashima (1995) is incorrect.

4. Newly Discovered Fact

4.1. Anaphoricity and Cataphoricity

As is well known, demonstrative *this* can refer to either to prior or subsequent discourse as in (4a) and (4b) respectively:

- (4) a. Kissinger made his long-awaited announcement yesterday. *This* statement confirmed the speculations of many observers.
- b. Now *this* is what we must do: round up all the usual suspects, ... (Lakoff 1974: 346)

This in (4a) is called anaphoric and *this* in (4b) cataphoric. On the other hand, *that* has only anaphoric use as in (5):

- (5) a. Kissinger made his long-awaited announcement yesterday. *That* statement confirmed the speculations of many observers.
- b.**That* is what we must do: round up the usual suspects. (Lakoff 1974:350)

4.2. Anaphoric and Cataphoric *this* as Filler in iWH-clefts

Collins (1982:73) writes about iWH-clefts (marked WH-clefts in his terms) as

follows:

- (6) Marked WH-clefts typically have as theme a demonstrative or deictic item whose antecedent is an extended stretch of prior text.

Likewise, Takashima (1995) reports that all the 114 examples of *this* as Filler of iWH-clefts in his corpora were used anaphorically. By re-examining the data used in Takashima (1995), it has turned out that some of them are in fact cataphoric. The following are the examples:

- (7) a. {CH1: paragraph 1} "It can't hurt now," was Mr. herlock Holmes's comment when, for the tenth time in as many years, I asked his leave to reveal the following narrative.

So it was that at last I obtained permission to put on record what was, in some ways, the supreme moment of my friend's career.

"It may be some fussy, self-important fool; it may be a matter of life or death," said he as he handed me the note.

"I know no more than this message tells me."

It was from the Carlton Club and dated the evening before.

This is what I read: - Sir James Damery presents his compliments to Mr. herlock Holmes and will call upon him at 4:30 to-morrow.

Sir James begs to say that the matter upon which he desires to consult Mr. olmes is very delicate and also very important.

He trusts, therefore, that Mr. olmes will make every effort to grant this interview, and that he will confirm it over the telephone to the Carlton Club.

{CH1: paragraph 5} (*The Adventure of the Illustrious Client* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1924)

- b. {CH6: paragraph 20} "I came to you; for you are the one man that would advise me.

I told you that I had a store in the East before I came here.

I left good friends behind me, and one of them is in the telegraph service.

Here's a letter that I had from him yesterday.

It's this part from the top of the page.

You can read it yourself."

This was what McMurdo read: - "How are the Scowrers getting on in your

parts? We read plenty of them in the papers.

Between you and me I expect to hear news from you before long.

Five big corporations and the two railroads have taken the thing up in dead earnest. They mean it, and you can bet they'll get there! They are right deep down into it.

Pinkerton has taken hold under their orders, and his best man, Birdy Edwards, is operating.

The thing has got to be stopped right now.

{CH6: paragraph 25} (*The Valley of Fear* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1915)

- c. {CH11: paragraph 105} "Just as you wish."

"They have treated me shamefully- shamefully.

In the middle of the hut a flat stone served the purpose of a table, and upon this stood a small cloth bundle- the same, no doubt, which I had seen through the telescope upon the shoulder of the boy.

It contained a loaf of bread, a tinned tongue, and two tins of preserved peaches.

As I set it down again, after having examined it, my heart leaped to see that beneath it there lay a sheet of paper with writing upon it.

I raised it, and *this* was what I read, roughly scrawled in pencil: "Dr. Watson has gone to Coombe Tracey."

{CH11: paragraph 110} (*The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1901)

These examples indicate that Filler *this* of iWH-clefts can refer to posterior discourse.

5. Conclusion

We have seen in section 3 that the position of iWH-clefts is not restricted to near the end of the discourse unit, and in section 4.2, moreover, that Filler *this* of iWH-clefts can be cataphoric. *That* cannot have a posterior antecedent as shown in (5b). Now taking these facts into consideration, let us consider the information structures of a WH-cleft whose filler is *this* and an iWH-cleft whose filler is *this* or *that* as in (8):

- (8) a. WH-clefts: WH-clause is (was) *this*

b. iWH-clefts: *this/that* is (was) WH-clause

Note that there are no WH-clefts whose fillers are *that*, and that *this*⁵ in WH-clefts are all cataphoric in the present corpora⁶. What this seems to indicate is that the filler of WH-clefts always represents new information, as claimed in Takashima (1995). In this paper we follow the definitions of new and old information by Chafe (1974:111), shown in (9):

- (9) a. Old information is what a speaker assumes to be in his/her addressee's consciousness at the time of speech.
 b. New information is what a speaker assumes not to be in his/her addressee's consciousness at the time of speech.

Thus, in (8a) the stream of information is from old to new, which is the standard information placement. As for (8b), the anaphoric *this* and *that* represent old information. On the assumption that all WH-clauses in clefts represent old information, what is new in these cases is the identifying relationship, which has been discussed in Takashima (1996). What is problematic is the cataphoric *this* in (8b). Being cataphoric, this *this* represents new information, so that the stream of information is from new to old.

From the observation above we can see that a cataphoric *this* appears in both types of clefts, WH-clefts and iWH-clefts as in (10):

- (10) a. What I read was this.
 b. This was what I read.

By investigating the differences in discourse between these two types of WH-clefts, we will be able to find the functional differences between them. WH-clauses in WH- and iWH-clefts seem to represent latent old information, which may have been introduced somewhere in the previous discourse, or may be legitimately supposed by the speaker to be in the addressee's consciousness. One of the functions of WH-clefts is to establish the theme of discourse by identifying new material with hidden old information represented by WH-clauses, so they tend to appear somewhere near the beginning of the discourse unit. One of the functions of iWH-clefts, on the other hand,

seems to be identifying material previously or posteriorly introduced in the discourse (e. g. anaphoric and cataphoric *this*, respectively) with the hidden old information. This hidden old information can serve anytime as an identifier⁷ according to the demands of the speaker. Thus, the position of iWH-clefts in the discourse seems free. Verification of this statement will be conducted in a forthcoming paper.

Notes

* I am very grateful to my colleague, Martin Gore for having corrected stylistic as well as grammatical errors. All remaining inadequacies are my own.

1. The filler in *it*-clefts and WH-clefts is the constituent immediately following the copula, and the filler in iWH-clefts is the constituent immediately preceding the copula.
2. This corpus was made of the text files contained in the CD-ROM entitled *World Library's 171 Stories of Murder, Mystery, Magic, Terror & More...* by World Library, Inc. This CD-ROM contains 171 complete and unabridged stories by American and English novelists, including all works of Arthur Conan Doyle, 26 works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, 56 works of Edgar Allan Poe and others.
3. The reason why we place such a restriction on the data examined is that LITERATURE corpus has marks inserted every five paragraphs in many of the text files contained, and from these we can see whether the positions of iWH-clefts are near the beginning or the end of the discourse. A paragraph is assumed to be a discourse unit in this paper.
4. Italic and bold characters are mine throughout the paper.
5. There are 9 examples in this use of *this*. The *this* discussed in this paper is not the basic demonstrative *this* as below:

This is for you, John.

This *this* indicates the object which is near to the speaker. The *this* at issue in this paper makes reference to prior or posterior discourse.

6. The corpora used in this paper consist of the following:

BROWN corpus: 100 text samples of some 2,000 words representing 15 categories of American English texts printed in 1961.

LOB corpus: 500 text samples selected from texts printed in Great Britain in 1961.

TIME corpus: full texts of every issue of TIME from Jan. 2, 1989 to Sept. 30,

1991 and from Jan. 6, 1992 to Jan. 4, 1993.

CNN corpus: textualized extracts of CNN News from Jan. 1990 to Nov. 1992.

CAPTION corpus: textualized captions of 5 American movies whose titles are *The Fugitive* (1993), *Dennis The Menace* (1993), *Under Siege* (1992), *Demolition Man* (1993), and *Beverly Hillbillies* (1993).

LITERATURE corpus: see note 1.

7. As for identifier, see Takashima (1996: 11-13)

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