

Spanish does not have cleft sentences^{*}

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Shim, Sang-Wan(2009), Spanish does not have cleft sentences.

English is said to distinguish clefts from pseudo-clefts. In fact, in this language both sentences behave differently in numerous respects, so the terminological distinction is justifiable. The goal of this paper is to argue that, in contrast to English, Spanish does not have such a distinction. To support my claim, I provide several pieces of evidence that there is no syntactic difference between clefts and pseudo-clefts. Based on this fact, I further claim that Spanish has only pseudo-clefts. Finally, I suggest that the analysis developed here allows us to provide a straightforward account of the ungrammaticality of sentences such as *Fue este libro que compré ayer.

[Spanish syntax / cleft sentences / pseudo-cleft sentences]

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I . Introduction

Compare (1) and (2).

(1) It is this book [that I bought yesterday].

(2) Es este libro [lo que compré ayer].

‘It is this book that I bought yesterday.’

(1) is a typical English cleft sentence and (2) is its (Peninsular) Spanish counterpart. However, according to my teaching experience, most of my Korean students, especially who know English grammar well, are tempted to translate (1) as follows.¹⁾

(3) *Es este libro [**que** compré ayer]

Why do they think (3) is the equivalent of (1)? Probably, it is due to the apparent similarity between (1) and (3). That is, (3) seems to be closer in structure to (1) than (2) in that it contains *que*, which is widely assumed to be the counterpart of *that*.²⁾ Thus, for them the unacceptability of (3) is unexpected.

Another thing that also makes them confused is that *que* ‘that’ in (4) must head the bracketed constituent, whereas *que* in (5) cannot.

(4) El chico [{*que*/ **quien*/ **el que*} besó a María] es francés.

1) There exists a difference between Peninsular and American Spanish. According to Moreno (1999: 4281), in the dialects of South and Central America the conjunction *que* is widely used instead of a relative pronoun like *el que* or *quien* ‘who’.

(i)a. Es el barbero *que* lo rasura.

‘It is the barber that shaves him.’

2) See Shim (1999) for a different view.

‘The boy who kissed Mary is a French.’

(5) Es ese chico [{quien/ el que/ *que} besó a María]

‘It is that boy that kissed Mary.’

(4) is a typical restrictive relative construction. It is well known that Spanish disallows the relative pronoun *quien* ‘who’ to head the restrictive relative clause in sentences like (4). That is, when the subject is relativized, it is obligatory to use *que*, instead of *quien*. However, notice that the internal structure of the bracketed constituent in both examples seems to be (almost) the same: a restrictive relative clause. In addition, *ese chico* ‘that boy’ in (5) also functions as subject of the bracketed constituent just as in (4). Hence, it seems to be natural for students to wonder why *que* is disallowed to appear in (5).

Thus, the goal of this paper is to provide a syntactic account of why *que* is not allowed to appear in sentences like (3) and (5). I will argue that in order to provide an adequate account we first need to understand some differences between Spanish and English with respect to cleft/pseudo-cleft distinction. Hence, I will focus on discussing differences between the two languages. More specifically, I will argue that, in contrast to English, Spanish has no cleft/pseudo-cleft distinction. To support my claim I will provide syntactic evidence that in Spanish, unlike English, clefts and pseudo-clefts behave in the same way in a number of respects. Finally, I will show that my claim allows us to provide a straightforward account of the ungrammaticality of sentences like (3) and (5).

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2 I focus on discussing differences between a relative clause and the clause following the focus in clefts. In section 3.1 I show that in English clefts and pseudo-clefts behave differently in numerous respects. In section 3.2 I first argue that in Spanish, in contrast to English, clefts and pseudo-clefts do not show any syntactic

differences. Based on this fact, I claim that in Spanish there is no real distinction between clefts and pseudo-clefts. I suggest that this language has only pseudo-clefts. I further suggest that the analysis developed here straightforwardly accounts for why sentences like (3) and (5) are ruled out. Section 4 offers a brief conclusion.

II. Clefts vs. restrictive relatives

I have pointed out above that many Korean students wrongly believe that the bracketed constituent in sentences like (3) and (5) is a restrictive relative clause. In fact, it is obviously close in structure to a restrictive relative clause. Examples below show that pronouns used in relative clauses (who, that, 'zero' pronoun) are also used to introduce cleft sentences.

- (6) a. It was John {that/ who} broke the window.
- b. It's me (that) he gave the book.

Moreover, as in relative clauses, the noun can be fronted from a position in a prepositional phrase, or from a position in a nominal clause as object, as shown below.

- (7) a. The girl that you are complaining about is my daughter.
- b. It's the girl that I was complaining about (not the boy).
- (8) a. The watch I said I would let you have is missing.
- b. It's this watch I said I would let you have (not that).

(Quirk et al., 1972: 953)

In spite of these similarities, I will argue below that the clause following

the focused phrase in clefts is different from a relative clause. For this I will provide several pieces of cross-linguistic evidence. First, a restrictive relative clause does not allow an unmodified proper noun as its antecedent, as shown below.³⁾

- (9) **John* [that is studying Spanish] wants to visit Madrid.

However, clefts allow a proper noun to serve as the antecedent (= the focus), as illustrated below.

- (10) It is *John* [that wants to visit Madrid]

Second, in restrictive relatives the antecedent and the relative clause form a syntactic unit, whereas in clefts the antecedent and the clause immediately following it do not. For example, in the former the antecedent cannot be fronted alone leaving behind the relative clause, as shown in (11) and (12). However, in the latter it can be fronted alone, as shown in (13) and (14).

- (11) a. *Conozco al muchacho* [que estudia coreano].

‘I know the boy that is studying Korean.’

- b. *¿*A quién* conoces *t* [que estudia coreano]?

- (12) a. I want to meet *the man* [you often talk about].

- b. **Who* do you want to meet *t* [you often talk about].

3) Spanish also disallows an unmodified proper noun to serve as the antecedent of a restrictive relative clause, as shown below.

(i) **Juan* [que estudia español] quiere visitar Madrid.

John that studies Spanish wants to visit Madrid

However, in clefts even an unmodified pronoun can function as the antecedent, although what heads the bracketed constituent must be *el que* or *quien*, not *que*, as shown in (ii).

(ii) Es Juan {*el que* / *quien*} quiere visitar Madrid.

‘It is John that wants to visit Madrid.’

- (13) a. Es *Juan* [quien llegó tarde].
 ‘It is John that arrived late.’
 b. ¿*Quién* es *t* [quien llegó tarde]?⁴⁾
 ‘Who was it who arrived late?’
 c. Fue *a Juan* [a quien vimos].
 ‘It was John that we saw.’
 d. ¿*A quién* fue *t* [a quien visteis]?
 ‘Who was it that you saw?’
- (14) a. It was *John* who interviewed you.
 b. *Who* was it who interviewed you?
 ((b) from Quirk et al., 1985: 1386)

Further, since the antecedent and the relative clause form a syntactic unit in relatives, the relative clause cannot be deleted alone, as shown in (15). However, in clefts the clause following the focus can be deleted alone, as shown in (16).

- (15) a. ¿*A quién* castigaron?
 ‘To whom did they punish?’
 b. Al chico [que llegó tarde].
 ‘(They punished) the boy who arrived late’
 b’. *Al chico [e].
- (16) a. ¿*Quién* es el que llegó tarde?
 ‘Who was it who arrived late?’
 b. Es Juan el que llegó tarde.
 ‘It is John that arrived late’
 b’. Es Juan [e].

4) I thank José María Areta for grammaticality judgment of (13b, d).

Third, in Spanish relatives the antecedent and the relative pronoun must agree in gender and number, as shown (17). However, in clefts the relative pronoun does not necessarily agree with the number and the gender of the focused element, as shown in (18).⁵⁾

- (17) a. Se me ha perdido el lápiz con {el que/ *lo que} dibujé.
 'I have lost the pencil I drew with.'
- b. La inflación y el déficit público de {los que/ *lo que} hablas son preocupantes.
 'The inflation and the public deficit you are talking about are worrying.'
- c. El avión y el coche sin {los que/ *lo que} no podemos vivir contaminan mucho.
 'Airplanes and cars without which we cannot live contaminate a lot.'
- d. El tren en {el que/ *lo que} viajamos estaba muy sucio.
 'The train we travelled by was very dirty.'
- e. En aquel invierno {del que/ *de lo que} estamos hablando hacía mucho frío.
 'The winter we were talking about was very cold.'
- (18) a. Fue con aquel lápiz con lo que dibujó.
- b. Es la inflación y el déficit público lo que empeora la economía del país.
 (= Son la inflación y el déficit público los que empeoran la economía del país.)

5) Moreover, there exist cases in which the agreement even causes the ungrammaticality or degrades the acceptability.

(i) a. Es el invierno {lo que/ *el que} ha llegado tarde.
 b. Es el tren {lo que/ ?el que} ha llegado tarde.
 (Moreno, 1999: 4255)

- c. Es el avión y el coche lo que más contamina.
(= Son el avión y el coche los que más contaminan.)
- d. Fueron las llaves lo que perdió Juan.
((a-c) from Moreno, 1999: 4256, 4257, 4273; (d) from
Pinedo, 2000: 130)

Fourth, in restrictive relatives like (19) prepositions are allowed to appear only once. Namely, they can appear only before a relative pronoun, as shown in (19). However, in clefts prepositions are required to appear twice. If the clause following the focus is headed by a preposition, the preposition must normally be repeated before the focus, as shown in (20).

- (19) a. Aquél es (*a)l chico [a quien miramos ayer].

‘That is the boy we looked at yesterday.’

- b. Éste es (*con) el lápiz [con el que dibujé]

‘This is the pencil I drew with.’

- (20) a. Fue *(a) Juan [a quien miramos ayer].⁶⁾

- b. Fue *(con) este lápiz [con lo que dibujé].

Fifth, in Korean relatives Case-markers or postpositions are not allowed to appear, whereas in clefts they may appear, as shown below.⁷⁾

6) Unlike *mirar* ‘to look’, *ver* ‘to see’ may allow the omission of a before the focus, as shown below. I thank José María Areta for this point.

(i) Fue (a) Juan a quien vimos.

7) It is not clear whether sentences such as (22a, b) are clefts or pseudo-clefts. Kang (2006) suggests that sentences like (22a, b) are more compatible with clefts rather than pseudo-clefts. First, *kes* is not a *wh*-word. Second, APs cannot appear in the focus phrase. It is known that APs can be a focus phrase in pseudo-clefts, but not in clefts (cf. Jackendoff, 1977).

(i) a. [What Mary was] was proud of herself.

b. *It was proud of herself that Mary was.

The *kes* cleft construction does not allow APs in the focus position.

- (21) a. Nae-ga Bradley konghang-esse Minhø-lul poassta.
 'I saw Minhø at Bradley airport.'
 b. [Nae-ga Minhø-lul pon] konghang.
 'The airport where I saw Minhø.'
 c. * [Nae-ga -esse Minhø-lul pon] konghang.
- (22) a. Nae-ga Minhø-lul pon-kes-un Bradley konghang-ita.
 'It was at Bradley airport that I saw Minhø.'
 b. Nae-ga Minhø-lul pon-kes-un Bradley konghang-esse-ita.

In addition to the differences I have discussed so far, further differences have been pointed out by other linguists such as Quirk et al. (1972: 953) and Huddleston (1972: 246). Let us see some of them. First, in clefts the *wh*-items are rare in comparison with *that* and zero. Although *whose* is allowed (*It's uncle Bill whose address I lost*), *whom* and *which* are only marginally possible.⁸⁾

Second, in clefts the range of elements that can be relativized is apparently very much greater, including many adverbial elements, whereas in basic restrictive relatives only NPs are relativized.⁹⁾

- (23) a. It was *because he was ill* (that) we decided to return.
 b. It was *in September* (that) I first noticed it.
 c. It is *however only with relative values of X"* that we are concerned.
 d. It is *to these weak bending motions* that acetylene owes

8) Thus, Quirk et al. (1972: 953) claim that (i) has to be interpreted as a sentence containing a postmodifying relative clause (compare *She was the woman to whom I gave the water*) rather than as a cleft sentence.

(i) It was the dog to which I gave the water.

9) A *wh*-pronoun cannot be used in clefts where the focus element is an adjunct.

(i) *It was because he was ill which we decided to return.

(Quirk et al., 1972: 953)

many of its properties.

((a, b) from Quirk et al. 1972: 953; (c, d) from Huddleston, 1971: 247)

Third, the two constructions differ intonationally (**bold face** marks the nuclear stress in (24)-(25)). (24) answers an implicit ‘what money is that?’ -*it* is anaphoric and the nuclear stress falls on *need*. (25) answers ‘what do you need?’ or ‘what is it that you need?’- *it* is non-anaphoric and the nuclear stress falls on *money*.

(24) It’s money that I **need**. (basic restrictive relatives)

(25) It’s **money** that I need. (clefts)

(Huddleston, 1971: 246)

Fourth, in restrictive relatives the relative item cannot be omitted when it functions as subject, whereas in clefts the relative item may be omitted even when it has the function of subject.

(26) The man * (who/ that) lives next door loves Mary.

(27) a. It was John (that) did it.

b. It’s me (that) he gave the book.

c. It was his best suit (that) John wore to the dance last night.

d. It was the dance (that) John wore his best suit to last night.

e. It was in September (that) I first noticed it.

((a) from Huddleston, 1971: 247; (b-e) from Quirk et al., 1986: 952-953)

Fifth, unlike restrictive relatives, the *wh*-items *when* and *why* cannot occur in clefts.

(28) a. Tell me the reason why the show was cancelled so quickly.

b. I will never forget the day when I met you.

(29) a. It was because of the rain {that/ *why} he stayed at home.

b. It's tomorrow {that/ *when} he's coming.

To summarize the discussion in this section, we have seen that, despite apparent similarities, there exist a number of differences between a restrictive relative clause and the clause immediately following the focused phrase in clefts. These differences lead us to conclude that the clause immediately following the focused phrase in clefts is not a restrictive relative clause but a pseudo-relative one.

In section 2 I will first show that in English, clefts behave differently from pseudo-clefts in a number of respects, whereas in Spanish, clefts behave in the same way as pseudo-clefts. Based on this, I will argue that Spanish has no real distinction between clefts and pseudo-clefts. I will further argue that sentences which have been regarded as clefts so far are virtually a variant of pseudo-clefts.

III. Clefts vs. Pseudo-clefts

1. English

Before we move on to discuss syntactic differences between clefts and pseudo-clefts, let us briefly sum up the definition of the two sentences given by Quirk et al. (1972: 951, 954). The cleft sentence is a special

construction which gives both thematic and focal prominence to a particular element of the clause. It is so called because it divides a single clause into two separate sections, each with its own verb. Most English cleft sentences begin with the empty pronoun *it* followed by the copular verb *be*, which in turn is followed by the element on which the focus falls, as shown in (30).

(30) It is this magazine that Peter read last night.

The pseudo-cleft sentence is another construction which, like the cleft sentence, makes explicit the division between given and new parts of the communication. It is an *SV*C sentence with a *wh*-relative nominal clause as subject or complement, as shown in (31a, b). (31b) is often called reversed or inverted pseudo-cleft.

(31) a. What Peter read yesterday is this magazine.

b. This magazine is what Peter read yesterday.

There is a great deal of similarity between clefts and pseudo-clefts. For example, (30) and (31a, b) are synonymous, share the same presuppositions, answer the same questions, the constituent that receives the heaviest stress is the same in both sentences (this magazine), and in general they can be used interchangeably. Based on these similarities, a number of linguists such as Akmajian (1970) and Gundel (1977)¹⁰ have claimed that clefts are syntactically derived from pseudo-clefts by a rule which moves the initial clause to the end of the sentence.

However, I will show that, despite the similarities, there also exist

10) In contrast to Akmajian, Gundel argues that *it* is not empty at all, but is a copy of the right-dislocated NP.

(i) It was a good rest, what she needs.

differences that provide the justification for the terminological distinction between ‘cleft’ and ‘pseudo-cleft’. First, negative polarity items(henceforth, NPIs) can be focus in pseudo-clefts, but not in clefts, as shown below.

- (32) a. What we don’t need is *any eggs*.
b. *It’s *any eggs* that we don’t need.
(Gundel, 1977: 554)
- (33) a. What we weren’t able to do was make *any progress*.
b. What John didn’t buy was *any pictures of Ford*.
c. *It is *anything* that John did not eat.
((a) from Hankamer, 1974: 223; (b) from Bošković, 1997: 236; (c) from Saito, 2007: talk given at UCONN)

Second, floating quantifiers(henceforth, FQs) can be focus in pseudo-clefts, but not in clefts, as shown below.

- (34) a. What the little bastards did was *all* get into the tub at the same time.
b. ?What the students did was *all* take a shower.
c. *It was *all* take a shower that the students did.
((a) from Hankamer, 1974: 10; (b, c) from my informant(p. c.))

Third, pseudo-clefts allow (infinitival or finite) CPs to appear in focus position, whereas clefts do not, as illustrated below.

- (35) a. What he wants is *for us to get out of here*.
b. *It’s *for us to get out of here* that he wants.
c. What I wanted was *for John to go*.
d. *It was *for John to go* that I wanted.

((a, b) from Gundel, 1977: 554; (d) from Akmajian, 1970: 167)

- (36) a. What I believe is *that the world is round*.
 b. *It's *that the world is round* that I believe.
 c. What you are saying is *that the president was involved*.
 d. *It is *that the president was involved* that you are saying.

((b) from Akmajian, 1970: 167; (c, d) from Prince, 1978: 885)

- (37) a. What I wonder is *whether there will be any beer*.
 b. ^{??}It is *whether there will be any beer* that I wonder.

((a) from Hankamer, 1974: 228; (b) from my informant (p. c.))

Fourth, APs can be focus in pseudo-clefts, but not in clefts, as illustrated below.

- (38) a. [What he is] is *stupid*.¹¹⁾

- b. *It's *stupid* that he is.

(Gundel, 1977: 554)

- (39) a. [What John is] is *tall*.

- b. *It is *tall* that John is.

(Akmajian, 1970: 166)

Fifth, VPs¹²⁾ can be focus in pseudo-clefts, but not in clefts, as shown below.

11) (38a) is ambiguous between the predicational reading and specificational reading. On the predicational reading it means roughly the following: He is an X. Being an X/X-hood is stupid. So, if the relevant property of *John* in (38a) is that he is a linguist, on the predicational reading it means that being a linguist is stupid. On the specificational reading, it means that John is stupid.

12) It is not clear whether bare infinitives are VPs or vPs. It is not my purpose to determine whether they are VPs or vPs. For details about this controversy, the reader is referred to Abels (2003).

- (40) a. What John did was *go*.
 b. *It was *go* that John did.
 (Akmajian, 1970: 166)
- (41) a. What that does is *tend to rob Ervin and the grand jury with yet a third investigation group*.
 b. *It is *tend to rob Ervin and the grand jury with yet a third investigation group* that that does.
 (Prince, 1978: 885)
- (42) a. What John had done was *obtain the data*.
 b. *It was *obtain the data* that John had done.
 (Huddleston, 1984: 463-464)

Sixth, unlike pseudo-clefts, *wh*-items like *where*, *when*, *why*,¹³ *how* cannot be used in clefts. Only *who*, *which* and *that* are permissible relative pronouns in clefts, as shown below.

- (43) a. Where I saw John was in Boston.
 b. It was in Boston {that/ *where} he first met her.
 (Akmajian, 1970: 162, 163)
- (44) a. When I saw John was at five o'clock.
 b. It was yesterday {that/ *when} I realized folly.
 c. It's tomorrow {that/ *when} he's coming.
 ((a,b) from Akmajian, 1970: 162, 163; (c) from Huddleston, 1971: 247)
- (45) a. Why John came was to irritate me.
 b. It was to irritate {that/ *why} she did that.

13) Regarding the acceptability of the pseudo-cleft sentence with *why*, not all native speakers seem to agree. Quirk et al. (1972: 955) judge (i) to be ungrammatical.
 (i) ?*Why we decided to return was because he was ill.

- c. Why he was late was because he had overslept.
- d. It was because of the rain {that/ *why} he stayed at home.
((a, b) from Akmajian, 1970: 161, 164; (c, d) from Huddleston
1971: 247)
- (46) a. How John did that was by standing on a ladder.
- b. It was by standing on a ladder {that/ *how} John did that.
(Akmajian, 1970: 161, 164)

Finally, both constructions differ in that in pseudo-clefts the copular verb *be* may agree with the focused phrase,¹⁴⁾ whereas in clefts it must be in third singular form regardless of whether the focused phrase is plural or singular, as shown below.

- (47) a. What we need most {is/ are} books.
- b. What you must avoid {is/ are} feeling sorry for yourself and sleeping too much.
- c. What this country needs {is/ are} more blue-collar works.
- d. What I'm getting him {is/ ?are} both a tape recorder and a radio.
((a) from Quirk et al. 1985: 767; (b, c, d) from
Gundel, 1977: 547)
- (48) a. It's {John and me/ us/ those two/ them} who are responsible.
- b. It's {me/ you/ him} who is responsible.
((e, f) from Akmajian, 1970: 150, 151)

If we take into consideration the differences that we have discussed so

14) As Gundel (1977: 547. footnote 8) notes, *is* is preferred by native speakers even though the focused phrase is plural.

far, then we can conclude that the terminological distinction between the two constructions in English is justifiable.

2. No difference between clefts and pseudo-clefts in Spanish

Like English, a similar classification can be made in Spanish: clefts, pseudo-clefts and inverted pseudo-clefts, as shown below.

- (49) a. Es Juan {el que/ quien} ha llegado tarde. (CL)
 ‘It is John that has arrived late.’
 b. {El que/ Quien} ha llegado tarde es Juan. (PC)
 c. Juan es {el que/ quien} ha llegado tarde. (IPC)

However, I will show that in Spanish, unlike English, clefts and pseudo-clefts behave in the same way in numerous respects. The first evidence comes from the possibility for NPIs to be focus. Recall from (32)-(33) that English allows NPIs to be focus only in pseudo-clefts. In Spanish, however, both behave in the same way with respect to NPIs licensing: neither of them allows NPIs to appear in focus position, as shown below.¹⁵⁾

- (50) a. *Es *nada* lo que Juan no compró.
 ‘*It is anything that John didn’t buy.’
 b. *Lo que Juan no compró fue *nada*.
 ‘What John didn’t buy was anything.’

Second, recall from (34) that in English FQs can be focus only in

15) I will not discuss here why NPIs are not licensed in these constructions.

pseudo-clefts. In Spanish, however, FQs can be focus not only in pseudo-clefts but also in clefts, as shown below.

- (51) a. Lo que los niños hicieron fue meterse *todos* en el baño.
 ‘What the kids did was all get into the bath.’
 b. Fue meterse *todos* en el baño lo que los niños hicieron.
 ((a) from Moore, 1997: 4; (b) from my informant)

Third, recall from (35)-(37) that in English (infinitival or finite) CPs can be focus only in pseudo-clefts. In Spanish, however, CPs can be focus in both constructions. This is illustrated by the following examples.

- (52) a. Lo que Juan quiere es *que salgamos de aquí*.
 ‘What John wants is for us to get out of here.’
 b. Es *que salgamos de aquí* lo que Juan quiere.
 (53) a. Lo que creo es *que el mundo es redondo*.
 ‘What I believe is that the world is round.’
 b. Es *que el mundo es redondo* lo que creo.
 (54) a. Lo que me pregunto es *si ella vendrá o no a la fiesta*.
 ‘What I wonder is whether she will come or not to the party.’
 b. Es *si ella vendrá o no a la fiesta* lo que me pregunto.

Fourth, recall from (38)-(39) that English allows APs to be focus only in pseudo-clefts. However, Spanish allows APs to be focus in both constructions, as illustrated below.

- (55) a. Lo que Juan está ahora es *enfermo*. (cf. Juan está enfermo)
 ‘What John is now is sick.’

- b. Es *enfermo* lo que Juan está.
- (56) a. Lo que es Juan es *alto*.
 'What John is is tall.'
 b. Es *alto* lo que es Juan.

Fifth, we have seen in (40)-(42) that English allows VPs to be focus only in pseudo-clefts. However, Spanish allows VPs to be focus in both constructions, as shown below.¹⁶⁾

- (57) a. Lo que hizo Juan fue *irse de vacaciones*.
 'What John did was go on holiday.'
 b. Fue *irse de vacaciones* lo que hizo Juan.

Sixth, recall from (43)-(46) that in English *wh*-items like *where*, *when*, *why* and *how* cannot be used in clefts. Instead of these items *that* has to be used. In Spanish, however, *wh*-items like *donde*, *cuando* and *como* can be used in both constructions, as shown below.

- (58) a. Donde la conocí fue en Barcelona.
 'Where I knew her was in Barcelona.'
 b. Fue en Barcelona donde la conocí.
- (59) a. Cuando la conocí fue {ayer/ hace dos semanas/ en 1970}.
 'When I knew her was {yesterday/ two weeks ago/ in 1970}.'
 b. Fue {ayer/ hace dos semanas/ en 1970} cuando la conocí.

16) One may claim that in Spanish infinitival forms are not VPs but TPs and thus English counterparts of Spanish infinitives are not bare infinitives but *to*-infinitives. Even though we admitted this, it would not undermine my arguments since in English *to*-infinitives can be focus only in pseudo-clefts.

(i) a. What John had done was (to) obtain the data.
 b. *It was (to) obtain the data that John had done.
 (Huddleston, 1984: 463-464)

- (60) a. Como acepto esta nominación es con gran orgullo.
 ‘How I accept this nomination is with a lot of pride.’
 b. Es con gran orgullo como acepto esta nominación.
 c. Como lo hizo Juan fue con la lentitud de siempre.
 ‘How John did it was with the slowness of always.’
 d. Fue con la lentitud de siempre como lo hizo Juan.
 ((d), from Moreno, 1999: 4276-7)

Finally, recall from (47)-(48) that in English the copular verb *be* may agree with the focused phrase only in pseudo-clefts. In Spanish, however, the copular verb *ser* must agree with the focused phrase in both constructions if the focused phrase is generated as subject, as illustrated below.¹⁷⁾

- (61) a. El que ha matado a Pedro *soy* yo.
 ‘It’s me that killed Peter.’
 b. *Soy* yo {el que/ quien} {maté/ mató} a Pedro.
 b'. *Yo soy* {el que/ quien} {maté/ mató} a Pedro.
 (62) a. El que ha matado a Pedro *eres* tú.
 ‘It’s you that killed Peter.’
 b. *Eres* tú el que {mataste/ mató} a Pedro.
 b'. *Tú eres* el que {mataste/ mató} a Pedro.
 (63) a. Los que han matado a Pedro *somos* Juan y yo.
 ‘It’s John and me that killed Peter.’
 b. *Somos* Juan y yo los que {matamos/ mataron} a Pedro.
 b'. *Juan y yo somos* los que {matamos/ mataron} a Pedro.
 (64) a. Los que han matado a Pedro *somos* nosotros.
 ‘It’s us that killed Peter.’

17) See also Camacho (1999: 2780) and Moreno (1999: 4258) for more examples.

- b. *Somos nosotros* los que {matamos/ mataron} a Pedro.
 - b'. *Nosotros somos* los que {matamos/ mataron} a Pedro.
- (65) a. Los que han matado a Pedro *son ellos*.
 'It's them that killed Peter.'
- b. *Son ellos* los que mataron a Pedro.
 - b'. *Ellos son* los que mataron a Pedro.

In summary, so far I have shown that while in English clefts and pseudo-clefts behave differently in numerous respects, in Spanish both constructions behave in the same way. Based on this fact, I conclude that in Spanish there is no distinction between clefts and pseudo-cleft.

Given this conclusion, we are now faced with the following question: If Spanish has no distinction between clefts and pseudo-clefts, what is their nature? Namely, are they clefts or pseudo-clefts? I suggest that both of them are pseudo-clefts. That is, clefts are a syntactic variant of pseudo-clefts, as shown below.

(66) Three types of pseudo-clefts in Spanish

(i) variant I (basic form)

copular verb + focus + free relative clause
 (ex: Es Juan [el que ha llegado tarde].)

(ii) variant II

free relative clause + copular verb + focus
 (ex: [El que ha llegado tarde] es Juan.)

(iii) variant III (inverted pseudo-clefts)

focus + copular verb + free relative clause
 (ex: Juan es [el que ha llegado tarde].)

To explain the derivation of (ii) and (iii) from the basic form (i) I

As shown in (69), what must head the clause after the focus is the free relative pronoun *lo que*, which is usually used to head a pseudo-cleft sentence and is generally assumed to be the counterpart of *what*, which usually introduces a pseudo-cleft sentence in English. Thus, this fact confirms my claim that Spanish has only pseudo-clefts.

Given the claim that Spanish has only pseudo-clefts, we are now ready to answer the question raised at the beginning of this paper: Why are sentences like (3) and (5) ungrammatical, in spite of their superficial similarity with English *it*-clefts such as (1)? I claim that the analysis presented here allows us to provide a straightforward account. (3) is repeated here as (70).

(70) *Es este libro [que compré ayer].

Recall that Spanish has only pseudo-clefts and that Spanish pseudo-clefts are required to contain a free relative clause, irrespective of whether it appears in sentence-initial or in sentence-final position. In (70), however, the clause following the focus is not a free relative clause. As a result, (70) is straightforwardly ruled out. For (70) to be a grammatical sentence the bracketed clause must be headed by *lo que*, not by *que*.

To summarize this section, I have argued that in Spanish, unlike English, clefts are not distinct from pseudo-clefts. I have further argued that Spanish has only pseudo-clefts. Finally, I have shown that my argument allows us to provide a simple account of the unacceptability of sentences like (3) and (5).

IV. Concluding Remarks

In this paper I have discussed some properties of clefts and pseudo-clefts in Spanish. First, I have argued that, unlike English, Spanish has no distinction between clefts and pseudo-clefts. To support my claim I have shown that both constructions behave in the same way in numerous respects. Second, based on the fact that the clause immediately following the focused phrase must be headed by a free relative pronoun, I have claimed that Spanish has only pseudo-clefts. Finally, I have claimed that the analysis developed here provides a straightforward account of the unacceptability of a sequence of elements like ‘copular verb *ser* + focus + *que*-clause’.

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