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Farhad Moezzi pour

Trinity College Dublin, moezzipf@tcd.ie

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## Persian cleft constructions: A Role and Reference Grammar analysis

**Farhad Moezzi-pour**  
**moezzi-p@tcd.ie**  
**Trinity College Dublin**

### *Abstract*

*The present paper embarks on the study of Persian cleft construction within the framework of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG henceforth). RRG intends to investigate the interaction of syntax, semantics and pragmatics via the constituent, logical and focus structure as independent but interrelated domains of the paradigm. To start with, an attempt will be made regarding demonstrating the specification role of the cleft construction, which is a universally semantic property of the construction, in the syntactic, semantic and information structures. In Persian clefts, despite that the clefted constituent is the semantic argument of the predicator of the cleft clause, it bears the role of pragmatic predicate assigned by the matrix predicator and the optional presence of the cleft pronoun as well, originating from the non-isomorphic nature of the cleft construction which expresses a single semantic proposition through a bipartition syntax. Given that the copula does not agree with the clause-initial cleft pronoun, albeit with the clefted constituent, and also that the matrix grammatical elements are considered to be merely focalizers, the so-called demonstrative, i.e. "in" is regarded as emphatic pronoun. The syntax-information structure interface in the cleft-like constructions in Persian, such as extraposition and preposed adverbials forms one of the central analyses of this paper where it will be displayed that RRG is much more equipped than the other theories to reflect the linguistic interfaces within various grammatical constructions. Of the most important findings is the necessity to distinguish the anaphoric "in", 'this' in the extraposition construction and the emphatic "in" 'it' in the cleft construction.*

#### **List of Abbreviations**

**ACC:** accusative, **CLM:** clause linkage marker, **CONJ:** conjunctive, **DEIC:** deictic, **DEM:** demonstrative, **det:** determiner, **DCA:** direct core argument, **EZ:** ezafe, **IMPF:** imperfective, **IU:** information unit, **LDP:** left detached position, **MR:** macrorole, **NEG:** negative, **NOM:** nominative, **OM:** object marker, **PC:** pronominal clitic, **PN:** pronoun, **PREV:** preverbal particle, **PSA:** privileged syntactic argument, **PSPT:** past participle **SUB.CL.:** subordinate clause, **SUBJ:** subjunctive,  
**Notations:** -: affix boundary, =: clitic boundary

### **1. Theoretical approaches to cleft construction**

Thus far, different approaches have been adopted in order to reveal the true nature of cleft construction among which generative ones enjoy more popularity. These studies fall broadly into two categories: extrapositional and expletive approaches. It is necessary to introduce the cleft construction before reviewing these approaches.

Lambrecht (2001) considers the cleft construction as a complex grammatical structure consisting of a matrix clause and a relative-like clause that collectively express one single semantic proposition which can also be expressed in the form of a single clause without a change in truth-conditions. Matrix clause is headed by a copula whose predicative argument, namely the clefted constituent is coindexed with the shared relativized argument of the cleft clause. On the other hand, Declerck (1988) defines cleft constructions as a series of 'specificational' sentences whose semantic role is to assign a value to a variable. In (1), *John* is a value occupying the position *x* in the variable "x opened the door".

(1) It was John who opened the door.

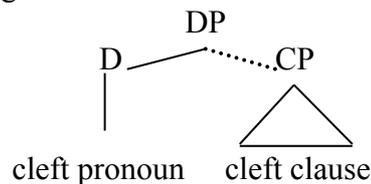
Extrapositional approach, originating from Jespersen's analysis (1927), treats the cleft pronoun and the cleft clause as a discontinuous semantic unit which correlates with the clefted constituent via the copula. The cleft pronoun, in fact, takes a referential interpretation as the extraposed cleft clause serves a modifying function for that. The identity relationship in (2) accentuates the copular nature of the cleft construction.

(2) It was John that I saw. → [it+ that I saw] was [John]

Expletive approach, having precedent in Jespersen's later-on analysis (1937) focuses on the relationship borne by the clefted constituent and the cleft clause leading to the consideration of the matrix elements, including the cleft pronoun and copula, as semantically inert elements as if they were not existent in the sentence. Now consider (3) in which the matrix elements make no semantic contributions to the meaning of the sentence and the cleft sentence and its non-cleft counterpart are semantically interpreted equally.

(3) It was John + that I saw. → [John I saw]

It should be noted that the derivational analyses of the cleft construction mainly suffer the shortcoming that the relation between the matrix clause and the cleft clause in the extrapositional approach as well as the one between the internal constituents of the matrix clause in the expletive approach have been sidelined. There are of course alternative approaches which take a non-derivational view on cleft construction in contrast to the above-mentioned approaches, which are essentially concerned with the derivational models of grammar. For instance, Hedberg (2000) argues that neither the extrapositional nor the expletive approaches can present a thorough analysis for examining the semantic and syntactic properties of the cleft construction. She is inclined to provide a comprehensive analysis instead, using both the foundational blocks of the afore-mentioned approaches. In Hedberg's analysis, opposed to the expletive approach, the cleft pronoun is not semantically and syntactically pleonastic. Rather, the cleft pronoun in association with the cleft clause forms a discontinuous semantic unit which is pragmatically interpreted as a definite referring expression in which the cleft pronoun plays the role of definite article. Following Abney (1987), the importance of her analysis pivots around the assumption that the cleft pronoun and the cleft clause together indicate a definite referring expression where the cleft pronoun pragmatically functions as determiner and the cleft clause functions as its nominal complement, as illustrated in figure 1.



**Figure 1: The cleft pronoun and the cleft clause as definite referring expression**

Hedberg (ibid) introduces a new insight to the syntactic analysis of *it*-cleft sentences which embodies both the extrapositional and expletive accounts along with the simultaneous semantic and pragmatic analysis of *it*-clefts in terms of the analogy drawn

between definite determiner phrase and cleft pronoun plus cleft clause. Hedberg introduces cleft clause as bearing direct semantic and pragmatic relation to the cleft pronoun and direct syntactic relation to the clefted constituent. In syntactic terms, cleft clause is “a complement extraposed from the subject DP and adjoined to the clefted constituent” (ibid: 912). The adjunction premise is the contribution of Hedberg’s analysis not only to abandon the conjecture that the cleft clause in cleft constructions is restrictive, but also to clarify the non-restrictiveness nature of the cleft clause.

Lambrecht (2001) proposes a discourse-functional framework for the analysis of the cleft construction. He makes use of Jespersen's non-derivational approach (1937) in which the matrix sequence of *it is* and the relative pronoun or the complementizer are treated as grammatical elements which do not enter into the semantic composition of the sentence. He attempts to accommodate a construction grammar basis for the explanation of the non-compositionality of *it*-clefts which implies that the matrix clause and the cleft clause constitute together a constructional unit whose meaning does not correspond to the meaning of the individual semantic units in the cleft construction. In his non-derivational account, Lambrecht (ibid: 468) considers the cleft pronoun as empty category, but as he mentions, “*it is not devoid of all meaning but merely that it does not play a semantic role in its clause*”. On the other hand, since the bi-clausal realization of *it*-clefts denotes a single semantic proposition, one of the two present predicators in the matrix and cleft clause must be semantically empty, and that is the copula in the matrix clause. Therefore, copula cannot assign theta roles to its arguments. However, the only indirect way to assign a theta role to the copular predicative argument is via relative clause predicator. The main question regarding Lambrecht's account is that if the cleft pronoun and cleft clause are semantically empty and the clefted constituent receives its theta role from the relative clause predicator, then what is their function? Lambrecht hypothesizes that the clefted constituent bears a pragmatic role, viz. *pragmatic predicate* assigned by the cleft pronoun and the cleft clause, while the clefted constituent receives its semantic role through the relative clause predicator. What differentiates Lambrecht's analysis from Jespersen's is that the former interprets the sequence of *it is* as both semantically and syntactically expletive as if they were not present. Conversely, Lambrecht takes the matrix predicator as bivalent predicator by which the focus phrase receives the role of syntactic predicate.

Davidse’s approach (2000) also pioneers a constructional account of clefts. She argues that there are two semantic relations in *it*-clefts; one is coded between the relative clause and the clefted constituent as the antecedent that evokes a value-variable interpretation than a head-modifier or restrictive relation; and the other is established within the elements of the matrix clause. In Davidse’s account, the cleft pronoun is not an expletive and the matrix clause imposes a specific ‘quantificational value’<sup>18</sup> on its complement. In order to dig into the constructional foundation of *it*-clefts, she utilizes Huddleston’s analysis (1984) in which the basic distinctive feature of an *it*-cleft is that

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<sup>18</sup> . Quantificational value indicates an inherent property of cleft constructions which implies the fact that the clefted constituent due to being placed in the postcopular position is the only value satisfying the variable embodied in the form of relative clause. Put it differently, it specifies exhaustively from a total set of instances, potentially capable of being the value expressed by the clefted constituent, an elements that corresponds to the variable. The quantificational value in Davidse’s terminology is akin to the “exhaustiveness implicature” used in Halvorsen (1978), Horn (1981), Declck (1988), among others.

the postverbal complement of the matrix clause and the relative clause do not form a grammatical unit even though the complement has an anaphoric relation to the relative clause; that is why Huddleston (ibid: 462) considers the relative clause in a cleft construction as “*sui generis*” which means ‘unique to the construction’. In her attempt to disprove the claim that the relative clause in the cleft constructions is restrictive, Davidse (ibid:1103) makes a comparison regarding the type of the relative clause in the *it*-cleft sentences and identifying sentences such as (4) where it is displayed that the addressee is able to identify the referent via the restrictive relative clause (RRC henceforth) whereas it is the clefted constituent per se that assists the addressee to pick up the intended referent in (5), leaving aside the relative clause which is pragmatically presupposed in the preceding context.<sup>19</sup>

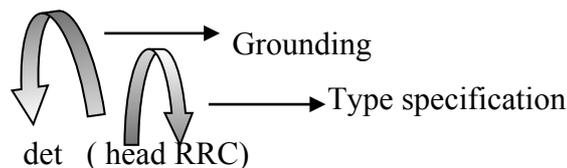
(4) A: Who was that on the phone?

B: It was [the boy [who that caused all the trouble] <sub>RRC</sub>] <sub>NP</sub>.

(5) A: Who caused all the trouble?

B: It was [the boy] <sub>NP</sub> [(who/that) caused all the trouble] <sub>RC</sub>.

More interestingly, despite that the most literature on RRG treats the whole postcopular NP as the antecedent; Davidse demonstrates that the RRC modifies only the nominal head whose combination with the RRC is grounded or identified by the determiner. This is in accordance with Langacker’s cognitive modeling of RRC constructions (figure 2) in which the internal assembly of the RRC and the nominal head is regarded as an element of ‘type specification’ which restricts the head noun’s type specification (1991: 432 cited in Davidse ibid: 1109). This contrasts with the antecedent in the cleft constructions which is the full NP (nominal head plus the determiner). Given that, the cognitive-semantic relation between the relative clause and its antecedent in the restrictive constructions and cleft constructions are respectively type specification and grounding as in the former the head noun designates a general type of an entity and in the latter the full NP designates a grounded instance.



**Figure 2: Internal dependency structure of a NP with a restrictive relative clause**

Pavey (2004) presents an insightful analysis of English *it*-cleft construction within RRG framework. Since I will employ the same paradigm for the analysis of Persian cleft constructions, I would prefer to provide a detailed characterization of her treatment of the English cleft construction here along with a sketch of RRG organization in the meanwhile. It is interesting to mention that Pavey also advocates the premise that clefts are required to be dealt with respect to the fact that they constitute a unique construction with unique syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features which are not

<sup>19</sup> . The contrastive intonational pattern in the earlier-mentioned sentences is another criterion that supports the view that the relative clause in the cleft constructions is not by its very nature restrictive as *it*-cleft sentences are uttered on a compound fall-rise tone which enables the speaker to mark the clefted constituent as information focus denoting a contrastive reading. On the other hand, the identifying sentences are normally uttered with falling tone-final salient element, namely the RRC cannot intonationally constitute a separate tone unit (Haliday (1967: 237).

applicable to their non-clefted counterparts. To account for the constructional architecture of English *it*-clefts, Pavey attempts to integrate the syntactic, semantic and informational characteristics of the cleft construction into a sort of an interlink between syntax, semantic and pragmatics modules of RRG so as to illustrate the adequacy of an interactional framework that enunciates the non-isomorphic substance of the cleft construction. Given that the derivational approaches either extrapositional or expletive focus only on one aspect of the cleft constructions whether the copular nature of the matrix clause in the former or the close affinity shared with the non-clefts in the latter, she maintains that the cleft pronoun is a syntactic core argument whose semantically dummy nature is represented through its absence in the semantic representation. *It* is dummy in the sense that it does not denote or describe a referent. Taking into account a discourse-deictic function for the cleft pronoun with respect to the cognitive status of the cleft clause based on Hedberg (2000) as well as its quantificational role regarding specifying an exhaustive value for the clefted constituent based on Davidse (2000), Pavey explicitly says, “it is simplistic to characterize the cleft pronoun as dummy expletive elements” (ibid: 154). Further, she disputes that the referential status of the cleft clause which leads to the selection of *it* or demonstratives (*that* or *this*) as cleft pronoun attributes a determiner-like function<sup>20</sup> which also consolidates the hypothesis that the cleft pronoun is not just dummy syntactic place-filler. It is worth noting that Pavey benefits from the distinction made by Lambrecht (1994) between semantic and *pragmatic predicate* in order to explain the mismatch between syntactic structure and semantic composition of the cleft construction. She believes that the traditionally semantic definition of predicate as ‘what is said about the subject/topic’ sets aside the pragmatic considerations as the clefted constituent in the *it*-cleft narrow focus construction has a “pragmatically predicative function and yet is not semantically predicational”.

Pragmatic predicate in the specificational sentences is defined as a predicate the designatum of which “is construed simultaneously as an argument on the level of semantics and as a predicate on the level of information structure” (Lambrecht 1994: 231). Thus, there is no constraint against the claim that a referring expression as clefted constituent plays the role of identification/specification rather than of predication. As for the referential status of clefted constituent, Pavey raises an issue where the clefted constituent might be a definite or an indefinite noun phrase. In case of definite noun phrase, the clefted constituent takes on a specific, referential, identifiable interpretation resulting from inclusiveness in the clefted constituent as the only value corresponding to the description expressed in the cleft clause. However, when an indefinite noun phrase appears as the clefted constituent, it is interpreted as specific but not as referential despite that the clefted constituent is already identifiable to some degree by the connection it holds to the cleft clause through coindexation. For example, in (6) what is being highlighted is that something ‘specific’ (a dog not a cat) meets the description in the cleft clause, not that a specific dog whose identity is clear to the hearer is involved in the eating act. Notably, the use of a referential indefinite noun phrase as clefted constituent triggers the rendering that the speaker gives only descriptive not identifying information about an identifiable entity due to his probable

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<sup>20</sup> . It is argued in Hedberg (2000) that Givenness Hierarchy (Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharsky 1993) can help the speakers select the appropriate form of the cleft pronoun. Since the cleft pronoun and the cleft clause serve as a discontinuous definite referring expression, by being aware of the givenness category of the cleft clause, the speakers will end up with the most appropriate form of the cleft pronoun.

reluctance or unawareness in revealing the full identification of the referent at the time of utterance, not that the speaker assists the hearer to build up a new representation for a previously unidentifiable entity. She argues that on one hand, the clefted constituent is identifiable because of its coindexed relationship to the generally presupposed variable, and its identifiability is not, to some degree, tied to the cognitive status of the variable, on the other. She suggests that the cleft constituent and the cleft clause, though coreferentially related, are semantically separate referring expressions.

(6) It is a dog that is eating your shoe.

The syntactic representation of *it*-clefts is diagrammed through the use of constituent and operator projection that are iconic by nature. The cleft pronoun is headed by the NP node. The node NUC anchoring the copula and the clefted constituent depicts the predicational nature of the clefted constituent. The cleft clause stands as periphery to the core in the matrix clause. One reason for the peripheral position of the cleft clause lies in that the cleft clause can be ellipsed<sup>21</sup>. The constituent structure of the English *it*-cleft sentence in (7) is represented below in figure 3.

(7) It was Caroline that hit Patrick.

Pavey also proposes the following logical structure for *it*-clefts in which the main predicate is **be'** rather than the predicate in the subordinate cleft clause. The main predicate owns two arguments; the first one matches the semantic content of the cleft clause containing a coindexed element which corresponds to the second argument in the logical structure and is realized in the form of the clefted constituent. The logical structure with two distinct arguments concurs with the specificational function of *it*-clefts as specifying a value for a variable. The point is that the logical structure of *it*-clefts roughly parallels their information structure despite that such straightforward equivalence does not necessarily arise in the cleft sentences (Pavey 2004: 217).

(8) a. It is Martha that eats octopus.

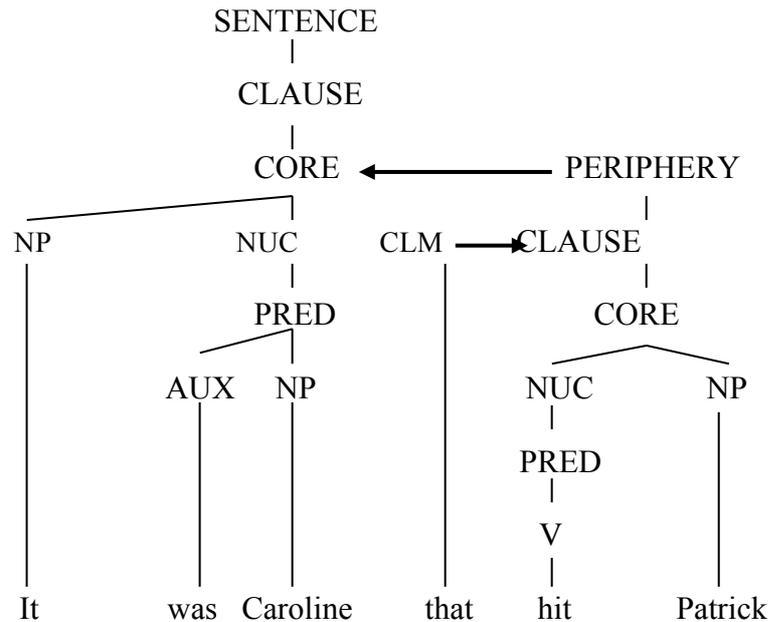
**be'** ([**do'** ( $x_i$ , [**eat'** ( $x_i$ , octopus))]), Martha<sub>*i*</sub>)

b. It's Martha who eats octopus.

**be'** ([**do'** (who<sub>*i*</sub>, [**eat'** (who<sub>*i*</sub>, octopus))]), Martha<sub>*i*</sub>)

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<sup>21</sup> . When the cognitive status of the relative clause is in-focus or activated according to the Givenness Hierarchy (Gundel et al 1993), the cleft clause can be ellipsed as it has been straightforwardly referred to in the prior discourse. This fact gives rise to the appearance of truncated *it*-clefts. Moreover, in case of relative pronoun in *it*-clefts, Pavey (2004: 206) assigns the pre-core slot to the relative pronoun. The syntactic structure of *it*-clefts with relative pronoun is not within the scope of the Persian clefts analysis and has been factored out for the sake of simplicity.



**Figure 3: Syntactic structure of an English *it*-cleft**

As for the information structure in *it*-clefts, the cleft clause is syntactically subordinate, thus interpreted as presupposition, and the clefted constituent is regarded as asserted information representing argument/narrow focus structure. The peripheral status of the cleft clause in relation to the matrix core results in its placement outside the actual focus domain. This can be shown by the infelicity occurring if an element within the cleft clause is questioned. The information structure in complex sentences is governed by a general constraint that Van Valin (2005: 214) puts in (9). The focus structure projection in (7) is represented below in figure 4.

(9) *The potential focus domain in complex sentences*

A subordinate clause may be within the potential focus domain if it is a direct daughter of (a direct daughter of...) the clause node which is modified by the illocutionary force operator.

(10) Q: Was it Kim that arrived at the party late?

A: NO, Pat.

A: ?? NO, early.

A: ?? No, the concert.

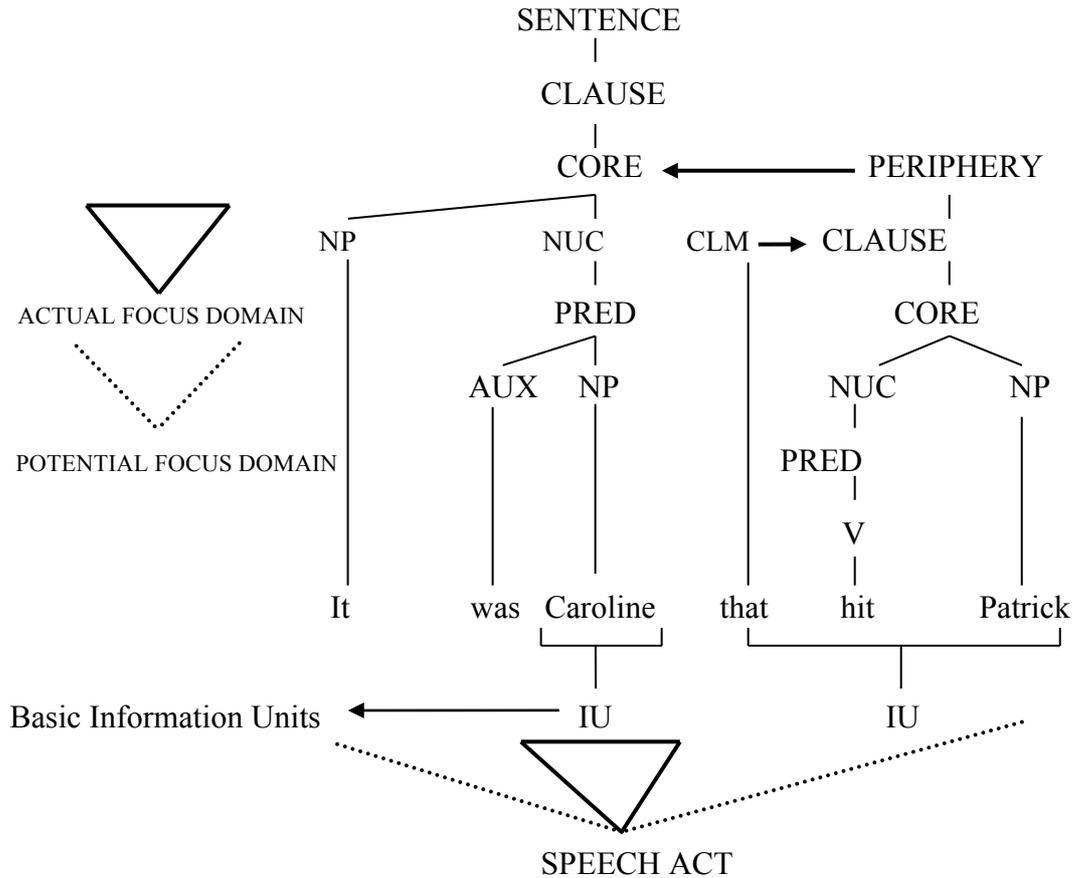


Figure 4: Formal expression of information structure in *it*-clefts

2. An introduction to Persian clefts and pseudoclefts

To date, few studies have been undertaken to explore the nature of Persian cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions. Following the works of Mahootian (1996), Gholam Alizade (1998), Karimi (2005), and Khormai and Shahbaz (2010), Persian exhibits three patterns of cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions viz. *it*-cleft sentences, basic *Wh*-cleft sentences and reverse *Wh*-cleft sentences. Clefting in Persian involves moving the focused element from its unmarked position to the start of the sentence followed by a copula (*bud-an* ‘to be [PAST]’) or (*hast-an* ‘to be [PRES]’) and a *ke* ‘that’ relative clause.

- (11) in farhād bud ke širin=rā dust dāšt.  
 this Farhad be.PAST.3SG that Shirin=OM love have.PAST.3SG  
 ‘It was Farhad who loved Shirin.’

It is possible to cleft the direct core arguments (DCAs) and oblique core arguments (OCAs) as well as peripheral adjuncts in Persian. Now consider the examples in (12), (13) and (14) which allow for the possibility for an indirect object, a prepositional adverbial and also a bare NP adverbial to occur in the clefted constituent slot.

(12) *be rahju bud ke man ketāb=o dād-am.*  
 to Rahju be.PAST.3SG that PN.1SG book=OM give.PAST-1SG  
 ‘It was to Rahju that I gave the book.’

(13) *tu xiyābun bud ke man did-am=eš.*  
 in street be.PAST.3SG that PN.1SG see.PAST-1SG=PC SG  
 ‘It was on the street that I saw her.’ (karimi 2005: 92)

(14) *diruz bud ke mehmun-ā res-id-an.*  
 Yesterday be.PAST.3SG that guest-PL arrive-PAST-3PL  
 ‘It was yesterday that the guests arrived.’

Mahootian (ibid: 118) defines pseudoclefting in terms of the movement of the non-focused elements from their canonical positions preceded by phrases like *kasi ke* ‘the one who’, *čizi ke* ‘the thing which’, *jāi ke* ‘the place where’, *hengāmi ke* ‘the time when’, etc.

(15) *kasi ke asb dus dār-e minā-st.*  
 someone that horse like have.PRES-3SG Mina-be.PRES.3SG  
 ‘The one who likes horses is Mina.’

(16) *čizi ke rāmin diruz bā sang šekast šiše bud.*  
 thing that Ramin yesterday with stone break.PAST.3SG glass be.PAST.3SG  
 ‘The thing that Ramin broke with a stone was a pane of glass.’

The example in (17) is a reverse pseudocleft sentence, taken originally from Khormai and Shahbaz (ibid: 54).

(17) *in ketab čizi-st ke mo>>arref=e nazariyy=e me>>yār mi-bāš-ad.*  
 this book thing=be.PRES.3SG that introducer=EZ theory=EZ standard  
 IMPF-be.PRES-3SG  
 ‘This book is what introduces Standard Theory.’

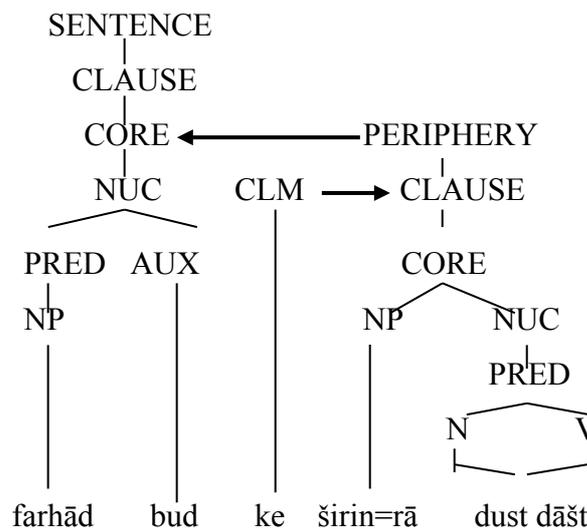
The structure of basic and reverse pseudoclefts can be formulated by (18) and (19) respectively.

(18)  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} Kasi \text{ ‘the one’} \\ čizi \text{ ‘the thing’} \\ jāi \text{ ‘the place’} \\ zamāni \text{ ‘the time’} \\ dalili \text{ ‘the reason’} \end{array} \right. + ke\text{-clause} + \text{clefted constituent} + \text{copula}$

(19)  $\text{Clefted constituent} + \left\{ \begin{array}{l} Kasi \text{ ‘the one’} \\ čizi \text{ ‘the thing’} \\ jāi \text{ ‘the place’} \\ zamāni \text{ ‘the time’} \\ dalili \text{ ‘the reason’} \end{array} \right. + \text{copula} + ke\text{-clause}$

### 3. Syntactic Structure of Persian Clefts

In this section, I attempt to take up the nexus-juncture relation in the first step to explore the layered structure of the clause in Persian cleft sentences. Working through the analysis proposed by Pavey (2004), the nexus-juncture relation in cleft constructions has to do with an ad-core subordination, which is largely motivated by adjoining a subordinate cleft clause to a matrix core through the complementizer, which is referred to as ‘clause linkage maker’ in RRG terminology. Naturally, the linkage type in *it*-clefts is an example of asymmetrical linkage, since the linked unit, the embedded clause, is contained within a sub-clausal unit, namely the matrix core. Why the cleft clause is placed in the periphery of the matrix core can be explained broadly by the two main reasons; one would be the fact that the cleft clause is a pragmatic presupposition by which the speaker signals the hearer to take for granted the proposition contained in the cleft clause. Secondly, the coindexation between the variable in the cleft clause and the value in the matrix clause will stimulate a syntactic dependency<sup>22</sup> leading to the placement of the cleft clause in the periphery. The layered structure of the clause for Persian cleft in (11) is given in figure 5. In this figure, I deliberately ignore going through the *in* RRG projection and look into that later.



**Figure 5: Layered Structure of Clause in Persian clefts**

As diagrammed in figure 5, the clefted constituent is placed under the PRED node tracing back to the earlier proposal which offers that the clefts need to be treated as a type of specificational construction in which the clefted constituent functions as a pragmatic predicate. This is because of the predicative function of the clefted constituent that it is projected in the nucleus of the main pragmatic predicate. It was also pointed out that Lambrecht (2001:471) interprets the presence of the cleft pronoun (optional in null-subject languages like Persian and obligatory in non-prodrop languages like English) and the copula as if they did not exist in the sentence. Hence, they do not make significant contribution to the semantic appraisal of the sentence.

<sup>22</sup> . Abbott (2000) uses the term ‘grammatical presupposition’ to refer specifically to the grammatical constructions reflecting the fact that what is presupposed vs. what is asserted depends in part on the syntactic structure of the sentence.



narrow focus construction is a non-isomorphic mapping relation between syntactic and semantic categories on the one hand and syntactic and information structure categories on the other, and cleft constructions can be viewed as “grammatical strategies for overcoming disparities between semantic structure and information structure”. This proves that cleft constructions are ‘sui generis’ (Huddleston 1984), ‘awkward’ (Sornicola 1988) ‘value-for-variable specifying’ (Declerck 1988; Davidse 2000) sentences the complexities of which cannot be grasped by concrete notions.

The interesting point about Persian cleft sentences is the fact that when the clefted constituent is a prepositional phrase (25 & 26) or an adverbial (27), the sentence is grammatically incorrect if *in* is included; but in case of a noun phrase (22 & 23) in the clefted constituent position, the sentence is definitely grammatical when *in* is present. Furthermore, the presence of *in* ‘this’ is optional when NPs are clefted.

(23) (in) šomā-hā bud-in ke mamlekat=o be in ruz andāxt-in.  
 (this) PN.2PL-PL be.PAST-2PL that country=OM to this day brought.PAST-2PL  
 ‘It was you who brought the country to this state.’

(24)  
 (in) kimiya bud ke tunest bā un be-sāz-e.  
 (this) Kimiya be.PAST.3SG that can.PAST.3SG with PN.3SG SUBJ-put up.PRES-3SG  
 ‘It was Kimiya who was able to put up with him.’

(25) (\*in) be rahju bud ke man ketāb=o dād-am.  
 (this) to Rahju be.PAST.3SG that PN.1SG book=OM give.PAST-1SG  
 ‘It was to Rahju that I gave the book.’

(26) (\*in) tu xiyābun bud ke man did-am=eš.  
 (this) in street be.PAST.3SG that PN.1SG see.PAST-1SG=PC SG  
 ‘It was in the street that I saw her.’

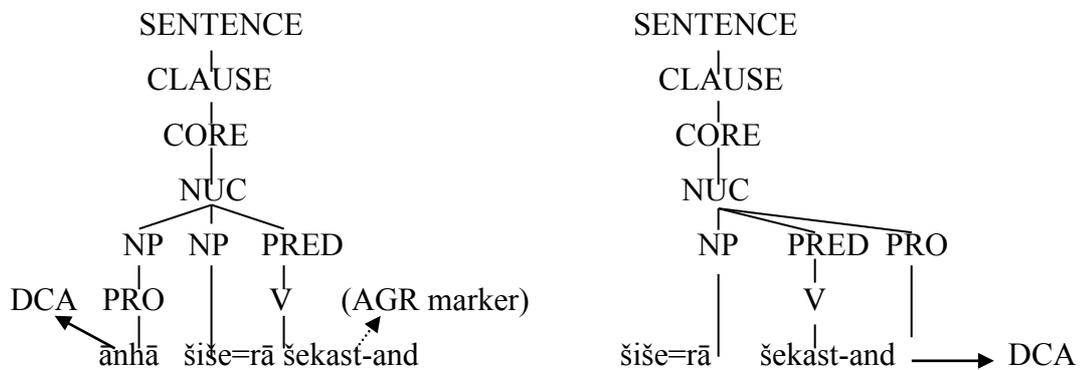
(27) (\*in) ruz=e šambe bud ke man un=o did-am.  
 (this) day=EZ Saturday be.PAST.3SG that PN.1SG PN.3SG=OM see.PAST-1SG  
 ‘It was Saturday when I saw him.’

Karimi (2005: 92) believes that Persian as a richly agreeing null-subject language lacks overt expletive. Comparing the sentences in (23)-(27), she analyzes that the optional presence of ‘*in*’ in (23) and (24) and the impossibility of its presence in (25)-(27) advocate the view that ‘*in*’ needs to be treated as a demonstrative and not a real expletive. She also maintains that the absence of the impersonal ‘there’ as in existential constructions is another consideration that Persian does not have an overt expletive. I agree in part with Karimi’s viewpoint that ‘*in*’ can only be used in cleft constructions when the clefted constituent is an NP, and also her other claim that the inclusive occurrence of ‘*in*’ with NPs would necessitate its deictic anaphoricity. However, this view would be problematic in terms of the analysis I will propose subsequently.

Time is ripe to determine the true nature of ‘*in*’ in Persian clefts regarding an RRG account. I raise the same question posed by Karimi (ibid): “Can *in* in (23) and (24) be considered a demonstrative rather than an expletive?” To answer this, I would like to cite the distinction made in RRG with respect to head- or dependent-marking

languages. It should be pointed out that Persian is a pro-drop language that the agreement between verb and its subject both in number and person is coded by bound morphemes, which are marked on the verb. Correspondingly, Van Valin and LaPolla (1997: 331) indicate that in pro-drop dependent-marking languages such as Italian, Spanish, Icelandic, Croatian, etc, the overt independent NPs count as the core arguments, with the bound morphemes merely being agreement markers. In case of independent NPs absence, it is the bound morphemes that function as core arguments. This is the situation in Persian that bound morphemes are considered merely agreement marker when NP subjects are directly available in the sentence. To illustrate this fact, I represent the layered structure of the clause in the examples in (28) in figure (6).

- (28) a. ānhā šīše=rā šekast-and.                      b. šīše=rā šekast-and.  
 they glass=OM break.PAST-3pl  
 ‘They broke the glass.’



**Figure 6: Overt NP and bound morpheme as DCA in Persian**

In spite of the straightforward pattern of subject agreement in core transitive and intransitive clauses, as shown in (28), Persian NP-clefted sentences exhibit agreement inconsistency such that the form of the matrix core verb (copula) does not co-vary with the phi-features of the so-called demonstrative; instead it co-varies with the phi-features of the clefted NP, although it must be the case that agreement correlates with the nominative case assignment in null-subject languages. Moreover, in case of PP- or adverbial-clefted sentences, the so-called demonstrative cannot appear in the clause-initial position, as shown in (25)-(27) and the verb agreement in the matrix core of the cleft sentence appears as default value of third singular. This inconsistent agreement pattern raises doubt on the axiom that first NPs in the Persian clauses decide the verb agreement. Clefts provide evidence not to rule out the contingency that Persian deviates from the generally accepted pattern of the verb agreement with the first NP in the clause.

Since the copula agrees with the phi-features of the clefted NPs in Persian, not with that of the optional ‘in’, ‘in’ cannot be considered as direct core argument of matrix predicator. Given that the privileged controller for agreement in the matrix clause is the clefted constituent, one would ask what the status of ‘in’ in Persian clefts is. As discussed earlier, Lambrecht’s (2001) constructional approach analyses the empty syntactic structure of the matrix clause, namely the succession of the copula and its overt or covert pronominal subject, to be a kind of ‘focus marker’ for the argument of another predicator. I believe that focus-assigning function of the matrix clause holds in

Persian with such a nuisance that the optional cleft pronoun or the same so-called demonstrative is not a pronominal subject because copula fails to agree with it. Syntax cannot apparently provide an answer to our question. This is where information structure succeeds in accounting for the status of ‘*in*’ which appears to be an overt expletive that plays a supportive, emphatic role when it is present in the matrix clause. By supportive, I mean that copula is the main instigator of the focus-marking function in cleft constructions as E.Kiss (1998) displays that copula has a [+focus] feature in the SPEC of AUX which triggers the focused-to-be element to possess the spec slot in the AUX node; the arbitrary presence of the expletive intensifies the focus-marking function of the copula. It is the case that Persian as opposed to non-prodrop languages like English does not require a dummy filler to be in the subject position so that the sentence be grammatical. The placement of the overt expletive ‘*in*’ complies with the pragmatic competence of Persian speakers to maximize the focalizing task of Persian cleft constructions.

According to the issue raised above, I represent the overt expletive in the periphery of the clefted NP to highlight these facts:

1. Overt expletive in Persian clefts is not a DCA due to the verb agreement failure
2. The peripheral status of the overt expletive signals its arbitrariness as well as its contribution to double the focus marking function of clefts<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> . The emphatic contribution of ‘*in*’ in Persian clefts is also confirmed by its combinability with *ham* and *če* as **emphatic** prefixes to form what Phillott (1919: 87) calls ‘emphatic demonstrative pronouns’, i.e. *ham-in* and *čon-in*. The examples below were taken from Mace (2003:59)

- (i) *ham-in ketāb=rā xarid.*  
 same-this book=OM buy.PAST.3SG  
 ‘He bought the same book.’
- (ii) *čon-in asb-hā=ye qašangi tā be hālā did-e-id.*  
 Such-this horse-PL=EZ beautiful till to now see-PSPT-be.PRES-2PL  
 ‘Have you ever seen such beautiful horses?’

The emphatic function of *ham* can be observed by the stress falling on it (Mace, *ibid.*), and also on closer inspection, we realize that there is no indication of deictic expression in the English gloss of *hamin* ‘the same’ and *čonin* ‘such’. Lazard (1957: 145) and Lambton (1966: 32) mention that Persian demonstratives, *in* ‘this’ and *ān* ‘that’ can be ‘strengthened’ by *ham*. This emphatic function has also been denoted by Persian grammarians such as Shafai (1984: 611); Anvari and Ahmadi Givi (1989: 263); Kalbasi (1992: 97); Nobahar (1993:205); Meshkatoddini (2005: 104).

It is interesting to know that Persian can exhibit the possibility that a proper noun is preceded by *in*. In this situation, one would have to consider the demonstrative as emphatic element which appears to strengthen the emotional load of the sentence, not to help the addressee identify the referent of the NP, because the proper nouns are inherently referential, hence no need to make them definite, unless the speaker intends to affect the addressee’s emotion. Consider the following examples by which I attempt to convey what I mean by emotional load.

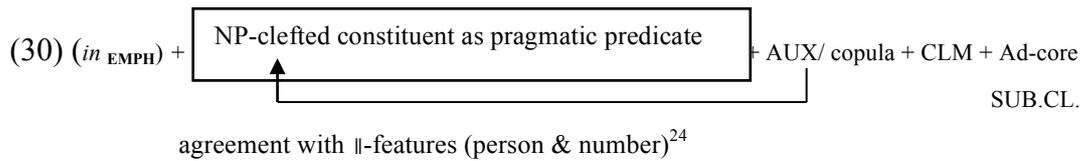
- (i) A: *be farhād goft-am age mašin=eš=o lāzem na-dār-e, be=het qarz=eš be-d-e,*  
 To Farhad say.PAST-1SG if car=PC.3SG=OM need NEG-have.PRES-3SG,  
 to=PC.2SG lend=PC.3SG SUBJ- give.PRES-3SG  
*vali alaki goft ke lāzem=eš dār-e.*  
 but dishonestly say.PAST.3SG that need=PC.3SG have.PRES=3SG  
 ‘I told Farhad to lend you his car if he didn’t need it, but he told me dishonestly that he did.’

- B: *in farhād ajab ādam=e mozaxrafi-ye.*  
 this Farhad what guy=EZ nasty-be.PRES.3SG

To make this point clear, I will display the syntactic representation of the example in (29) in figure 7.

- (29) in man bud-am ke raft-am taraf=e xāhar=am.  
 this PN.1SG be.PAST-1SG that walk.PAST-1SG towards=EZ sister=PC.1SG  
 ‘It was me who walked towards my sister.’

Here, I formulate the structural properties of Persian clefts following the argument provoked in the preceding lines in (30) and (31). Then, I will also show how these distinctive properties are stored in the syntactic inventory in figures 8 and 9.



‘What a nasty guy Farhad is.’

I would like to set up another context in which little Farhad and Neda are quarrelling and Neda asks her father to stop Farhad teasing her.

- (ii) Neda: bābā!!! be **in** farhād ye čizi be-gu, man=o azyat mi-kon-e.  
 daddy to this farhad one thing IMP-tell.Ø, PN.1SG bother IMPF-do.PRES-3SG  
 ‘Daddy!!! Plz tell Fahad not to tease me.’

<sup>24</sup> . In Persian, plural inanimate subjects may appear with 3<sup>rd</sup> /default morphology without number agreement (Sedighi 2006: 38). Consider the following examples.

- (i) in šaye?e-ha mardom=rā be xānde andāxt or (-an)  
 this rumor-**PL** people=OM to laughter drop.PAST.**3SG** or (**-3PL**)  
 ‘These rumors made people laugh.’

In RRG formulation of Persian clefts, the [ $\pm$  animacy] feature must be attended because it leads us to an argument against that the clefted constituent is not in the subject position. Look at the examples below.

- (ii) a. [*in* tāktik-hā]<sub>DP</sub> bud ke irān=rā be jām=e jahāni bord.  
 this tactics-**PL** be.PAST.**3SG** that Iran=OM to cup=Ez world take.PAST.**3SG**  
 ‘It was these tactics that took Iran to the World Cup.  
 b. [*in* tāktik-hā]<sub>DP</sub> bud-and ke irān=rā be jām=e jahāni bord-and.  
 this tactics-**PL** be.PAST-**3PL** that Iran=OM to cup=Ez world take-PAST-**3PL**

A closer look at (ii) reveals that in (a) the clefted constituent is an inanimate DP with which neither matrix clause nor relative clause verb agrees; however, both appear in default morphology agreement, namely third person. The reason behind considering the clefted constituent as DP is the fact that ‘*in*’ in (a) and (b) is a demonstrative. Further, prosody can help us identify that the DP is an integrated tonic group with primary stress falling on the NP, i.e. *tāktik-hā*. Now consider the pair in (iii).

- (iii) a. *in*’ [tāktik-hā]<sub>NP</sub> bud-and ke irān=rā be jām=e jahāni bord-and.  
 this tactics-**PL** be.PAST-**3PL** that Iran=OM to cup=Ez world take-PAST-**3PL**  
 ‘It was the tactics that took Iran to the World Cup.’  
 b. \**in*’ [tāktik-hā]<sub>NP</sub> bud ke irān=rā be jām=e jahāni bord.  
 this tactics-**PL** be.PAST.**3SG** that Iran=OM to cup=EZ world take.PAST.**3SG**

Above, I have illustrated the emphatic ‘*in*’ being separated from the clefted constituent by a pause (’), which means prosodically that both ‘*in*’ and the clefted constituents carry the primary stress. In other words, ‘*in*’ in (iia) and (b) is a part of the clefted constituent and functions as deixis, whereas ‘*in*’ in (iiia) and (b) is separated from the clefted constituent by a pause and functions as emphatic marker. Moreover, the agreement failure with ‘*in*’ in (iiib) and agreement success with the clefted constituent can provide the proof that the second NP is in the subject position of the matrix clause along with the fact that the

(31) (\**in* EMPH) PP-or ADV-clefted constituent as pragmatic predicate + AUX /copula +CLM +  
 ↓  
 Ad-core SUB.CL.  
 Default agreement: 3<sup>rd</sup> SG

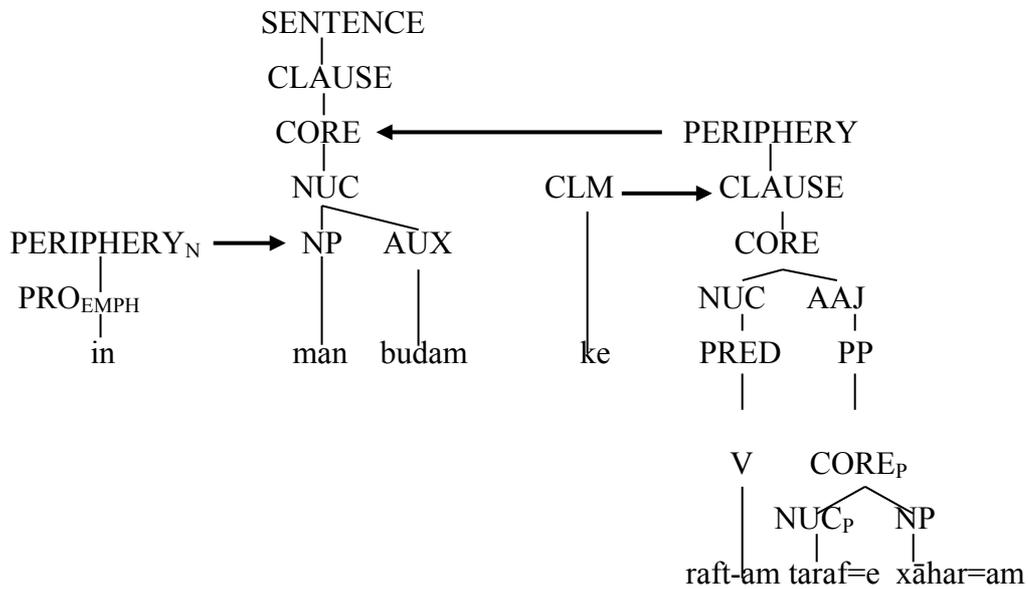


Figure 7: RRG projection of the Persian cleft Pronoun

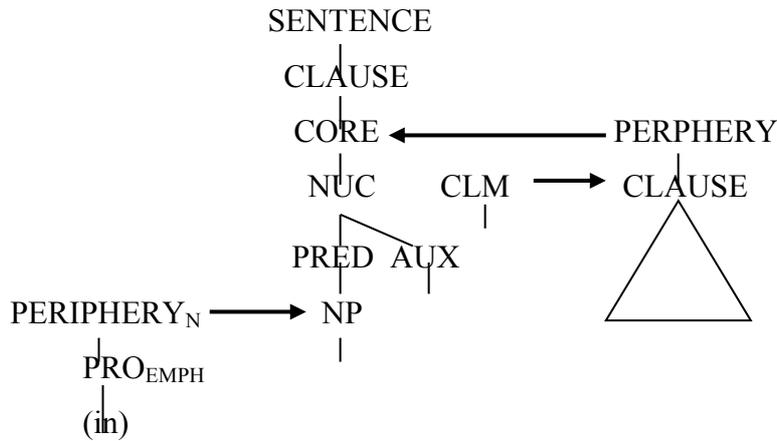


Figure 8: Syntactic template for Persian NP-clefted construction

emphatic function of ‘*in*’ must be distinguished from its deictic function, which is illuminated by syntactic, prosodic and informational considerations.

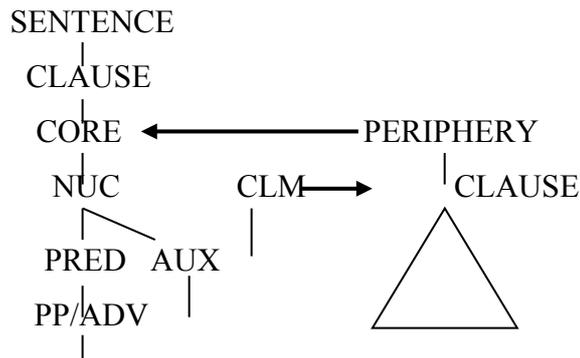


Figure 9: Syntactic template for Persian PP- or ADV-clefted construction

#### 4. Semantic Structure of Persian Clefts

Along the lines proposed by Pavey (2008), I employ an identical approach to the semantic representation of Persian clefts. She claims the function of noun phrases to alter from reference to predication. NPs which are non-specific and non-referential function as semantic predicate, whereas NPs which are specific and referential are referring expressions which probably function as pragmatic predicate in specificational sentences. Nominal semantic predicates are found in identificational sentences which provide descriptions, as in (32), while nominal pragmatic predicates are found in specificational sentences such as clefts and pseudoclefts, which serve to provide the hearer with the full identity of the particular entity the speaker has in mind, as in (33).

(32) Monica is a chef. (chef: Semantic predicate with descriptive function)

(33) George is the winner. (winner: Pragmatic predicate with specificational function)

She argues convincingly that it is in the communicative exchange that participants are able to cope with the cognitive and grammatical coding of the discourse referents. The communication procedure in uttering a specificational sentence operates in a way that the hearer is not able to identify fully a particular referent, although recognizing or guessing somehow; hence, the speaker assists the hearer to make a full identification of the underspecified referent. To settle such underspecification, it is urgent for the variable to be specific, non-referential and for the value to predicate something of the variable; the reason Lambrecht exploits the pragmatic predicate term. As Pavey (ibid) discusses, *the bank robber* in the communicative exchange in (34) can be described as identifiable, specific and non-referential in (a); thus, the speaker B starts with the same theme to enable the hearer to come up with intended referent.

(34) a. Who is the bank robber?

b. The bank robber is John Thomas.

As discussed earlier, the cleft sentences are considered as a type of copular specificational constructions that provide a value for a variable. So, the specificational function of *it*-clefts must be reflected in their logical structure. Following Van Valin (2005: 48), the logical structure of different types of copular sentences is represented as in (35).

(35)

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| a. Pat is small: <b>be'</b> (Pat, [ <b>small'</b> ])                             | Attributive      |
| b. Kim is a lawyer: <b>be'</b> (Kim, [ <b>a lawyer'</b> ])                       | Identificational |
| c. George is the winner: <b>be'</b> (George, [ <b>the winner'</b> ])             | Specificational  |
| d. Kim's sister is Sandy's lawyer: <b>equate'</b> (Kim's sister, Sandy's lawyer) | Equational       |

Pavey (2004) indicates the specifying function by exploitation of **be'** as the main predicate in the semantic structure of *it*-cleft constructions. This is the predicate used in the logical structure of the specificational sentences, as shown in (35c). It turns out that the specificational predicate is different from the English auxiliary *be* as it comes to mark specificational on a par with attributive and identificational predication. *Be* as auxiliary is not part of the predication in copular sentences.

The discrepancy between simple specificational sentences like (35c) and specificational cleft sentences can be identified by the value and variable being NPs in the former which contrasts with that the variable discourse referent not expressed syntactically as a noun phrase, although a relative-like clause in the clefts. **be'** predicate contains two arguments represented as *x* and *y*. *x* equals the semantic content of the cleft clause (variable) and *y* corresponds to the clefted constituent (value). Since specification is the most remarkable property of *it*-clefts, we should make adequate provision to envisage it in syntactic, semantic and information structure representation of the sentences. The copula as well emphatic cleft pronoun in Persian clefts is the syntactic device in doing so. As for the semantic participation in accomplishing such a cooperative task, the internal logical structure of the cleft clause has an unfilled argument that is coindexed with the second argument of specificational **be'**, i.e. *x*, representing the value. Therefore, I can illustrate the logical structure for Persian clefts in (11) as in (36).

(36) **be'** ([**love'** (*x<sub>i</sub>*, shirin)], Farhad<sub>*i*</sub>)

The point I would like to make out is that the emphatic *in* has not been represented in the logical structure in (36); it implies that this emphatic element in the Persian clefts makes no syntactic or semantic contribution to their analysis; hence an expletive, it only cooperates with the copula to affect the information structure of the sentence and strengthen the focus marking nature of Persian clefts.

Predicative and non-predicative PPs can be clefted and placed in the focus position of Persian clefts. Based on the RRG-based account, argument-adjunct and adjunct prepositions are predicative by nature; thus, this semantic property must be mirrored in the logical structure of the predicative PP-clefted sentences. To this end, Pavey deploys the abstract logical structures, which were adopted in RRG theory by Van Valin and Lapolla (1997) for representing the English *wh*-words in the precore slot. The history of abstract logical structures dates back in Jurafsky (1992). **be-LOC'** and **be-TEMP'** are abstract logical structures in (37b') and (38b').

(37) a. qazal māni=ro tu madrese did.

- Ghazal Mani=OM in school see.PAST.3SG  
 ‘Ghazal saw Mani in the school.’  
 a'. [**be-at**' (madrese, [**see**' (Ghazal, Mani)))]  
 b. qazal māni=ro kojā did?  
 Ghazal Mani=OM where see.PAST.3SG  
 ‘Where did Ghazal see Mani?’  
 b'. [**be-LOC**' ( kojā, [**see**' (Ghazal, Mani)))]
- (38) a. qazal māni=ro ba>>d=e madrese did.  
 Ghazal Mani=OM after=EZ school see.PAST.3SG  
 ‘Ghazal saw Mani after the school.’  
 a'. [**be-after**' (school, [**see**' (Ghazal, Mani)))]  
 b. qazal māni=ro kei did?  
 Ghazal Mani=OM when see.PAST.3SG  
 ‘When did Ghazal see Mani?’  
 b'. [**be-TEMP**' (key, [**see**' (Ghazal, Mani)))]

If the clefted constituent is an argument-marking preposition with its NP complement, the NP is coindexed with an unvalued argument in the complex logical structure. This is shown in (39b). Pavey maintains that in the semantic representation, clefted argument-marking prepositional phrases are treated the same as clefted noun phrases and not represented in the logical structure of the sentence.

- (39) a. be rahju bud ke man ketāb=o dād-am.  
 to Rahju be.PAST.3SG that PN.1SG book=OM give.PAST-1SG  
 ‘It was to Rahju that I gave the book.’  
 b. **be**' ([[**do**' (1SG, Ø) CAUSE BECOME **have**' (x<sub>i</sub>, ketāb)], Rahju<sub>i</sub>)

In case the clefted constituent is an argument-adjunct prepositional phrase, the abstract logical structure **be-LOC**' is used.

- (40) a. ruy=e miz bud ke ketāb=o gozāšt-am.  
 on=EZ desk be.PAST.3SG that book=OM put.PAST-1SG  
 ‘It was on the desk that I put the book.’  
 b.  
**be**' ([[**do**' (1SG, Ø) CAUSE BECOME **be-LOC**' (x<sub>i</sub>, ketāb<sub>j</sub>)], [**be-on**' (miz, y<sub>j</sub>)])<sub>i</sub>)

As can be seen, the variable in the specificational logical structure contains an abstract logical structure the first argument of which x, representing the unvalued argument of the predicative preposition, is coindexed through ‘i’ with the value as the second argument of specificational predicate **be**'. (y) in the value element of **be**' flags the second argument of the locative predicate, coindexed with it by ‘j’. This semantic representation covers up the specificational function of the Persian cleft constructions via **be**' insertion, represented by coindexation in the logical structure.

When an adjunct prepositional phrase is clefted, Pavey (2004: 225) recommends to use locative or temporal abstract logical structures, i.e. **be-LOC**' and **be-TEMP**'.

- (41) a. tu xiyābun bud ke man did-am=eš.  
in street be.PAST.3SG that PN.1SG see.PAST-1SG=PC SG  
‘It was on the street that I saw her.’  
b. **be'** ([**be-LOC'** (x<sub>i</sub>, [**see'** (1SG, 3SG)] j)], [**be-in'** (xiyabun, y<sub>j</sub>)] i)

According to logical structure of the adjunct prepositional phrases as clefted constituent, there is no missing argument in the logical structure of the cleft clause, but since clefts are specificational, it is necessary to identify a value for a variable in the logical structure of prepositional phrase.

Temporal adjunct can also function as focus phrase in Persian clefts, as already noted. To represent the logical structure of adverbial-clefted constructions, the **be-TEMP'** is used again.

- (42) a. diruz bud ke farhād mahdi=ro be pārk bord.  
yesterday be.PAST.3SG that Farhad Mahdi=OM to park take.PAST.3SG  
‘It was yesterday that Farhad took Mahdi to the park.’  
b.  
**be'** ([**be-TEMP'** (x<sub>i</sub>, [[**do'** (Farhad, Ø)] CAUSE [BECOME **be-in'** (park, Mahdi)]] j)], [**yesterday'** (y<sub>j</sub>)] i)

### 5. Focus Structure of Persian Clefts

Having taken a constructional approach to the analysis of Persian clefts so far, I follow up the taxonomy of focus structure, proposed by Lambrecht (1994), also adopted in RRG, with respect to the Persian clefts. Persian clefts are functionally narrow focus constructions in which the clefted constituent rests in the precopular actual focus domain in order to enable the addressee to interpret exhaustively the value element as specific referent holding a focus relation to a pragmatically presupposed proposition in the cleft clause.

Keep in mind that Persian clefts are semantically specificational constructions that provide a value for an underspecified element in the variable. It is noteworthy that focus of proposition is acknowledged not as a referential property of a denotatum in the discourse model; rather, as a relation established between the denotatum and the proposition.

This means that a focal denotatum may in principle have the same referent as a topical denotatum but what makes it focal is its new relation to the presupposition. In other words, a denotatum can be referentially given but relationally new. More strictly speaking, a cleft sentence is from a constructional viewpoint a disambiguative, discourse-pragmatic strategy on the side of the speaker to instruct the hearer to establish a pragmatic relation between a denotatum and a proposition. RRG provides the Persian speakers with two syntactic templates including the focus structure projection, given in figures 10 and 11.

The cleft clause is not placed in the focus domain because it is pragmatically and grammatically presupposed. As reflection of this, the units in the cleft clause cannot be interrogated, as shown in (43).

- (43) Q: mahdi bud ke farhād diruz bord=eš pārk?

Mahdi be.PAST.3SG that Farhad yesterday take.PAST.3SG=PC.3SG park  
 ‘Was it Madi that Farhad took to the park?’

A: na, māni (bud)/ \* na, sinamā/ \* na, dišab [ke farhād diruz bord=eš park].  
 no Mani (be) no cinema no last night  
 ‘No, it was Mani.’

Let’s have a look at the information distribution in the example in (44), taken from *Bufe kur* ‘the blind owl’ [Hedayat 1936].

(44) tanhā marg ast ke doruq ne-mi-gu-(y)ad! hozur=e  
 only death be.PRES.3SG that lie NEG-IMPF-tell.PRES-3SG presence=EZ  
 marg hame=(y)e mouhumāt=rā nist-o nābud mi-kon-ad.  
 death all=EZ hallucinations=OM destroy-CONJ ruin IMPF-do.PRES-3SG  
 mā bačče=(y)e marg hast-im va marg ast ke mā=rā  
 PN.1PL child=EZ death be.PRES-1PL and death be.PRES.3SG that PN.1PL=OM  
**az faribkāri-hā=(y)e zendegi nejāt mi-dah-ad.**  
 from deceit-PL=EZ life save IMPF-give.PRES-3SG

‘It is only death that does not lie. Death existence annihilates all hallucinations.  
 We are the children of death and it is death that rescues us from the deceits of  
 life.’ P.69

I would like to turn to the relational and referential givenness/newness and relational givenness/newness distinction (Gundel 2004, 2008) where the former is defined in terms of a semantic/conceptual partition of a sentence into two complementary parts, x and y; x is what the sentence is about and y is what is predicated about x, and the latter is defined in terms of the relation between a linguistic expression and a corresponding entity in the discourse model that is based on the referential Givenness Hierarchy (Gundel et al 1993). In (44), the cognitive status of the clefted constituent *marg* is referentially presupposed/ given because it is ‘in-focus’ of the preceding discourse model. Likewise, the cleft clause material is referentially presupposed because it at least entails ‘uniquely identifiable’ in the proposition ‘x mā=rā az faribkārihā=(y)e zendegi nejāt midahad’.

Interestingly, being directly evoked in the discourse, the clefted constituent bears a focus relation to the propositional content of the cleft clause (as it is projected in the PRED node of the syntactic template in figure 4.10) on the grounds that it establishes a ‘new’ relation to an indirectly-evoked mistaken belief that death could be the endpoint of life. The author would be inclined to convey to his addressee (probably afraid of death) that death is not the end, rather a rebirth by the stating *mā bačče=ye marg hast-im* ‘we are the children of death’. Accordingly, *marg* is considered relationally new.

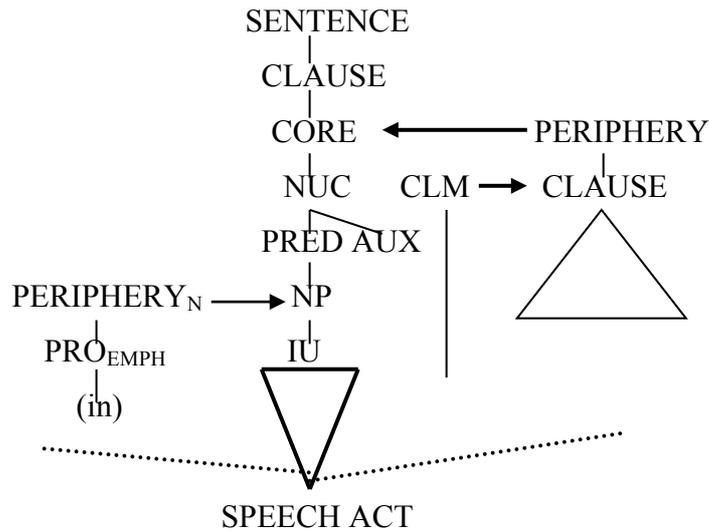


Figure 10: Persian NP-clefted syntactic template with focus structure projection

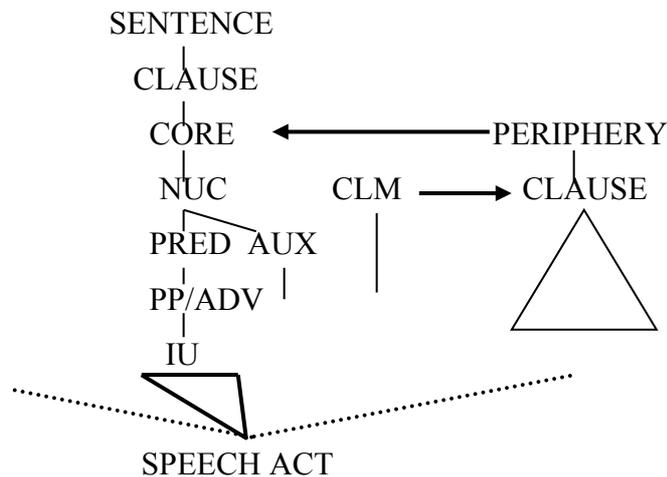


Figure 11: Persian PP- or ADV-clefted syntactic template with focus structure projection

To elaborate on the relational status of the relative clause [RC] proposition, I employ the notions of Knowledge-presupposition [k-presupposition] and Topicality-presupposition [T-presupposed] in Lambrecht (2001). The RC-proposition in the cleft clause is known to the hearer as it is a part of pragmatic presupposition, i.e. K-presupposed (the hearer is ready to take for granted at utterance time that death will rescue us from life deceits)); yet it is not of hearer’s current interest; hence not T-presupposed (the topicality of the RC-proposition is not sufficiently salient to be ‘ratified’/ pragmatically accommodated, that is , the hearer is not expected to be given information about death’s capability to rescue humans). This leads us to consider the RC-proposition of (44) as relationally new. To summarize, the cleft sentence above is a sample of informative-presupposition, evidenced by the primary stress falling on an element inside the cleft clause, namely *nejāt*. Khormai and Shahbaz (2010) argue that in case of informative-presupposition clefts, the hearer is cognitively invited to evaluate the proposition in the cleft clause as given. This is what Lambrecht (1994) calls ‘pragmatic accommodation’, a discourse strategy that enables the interlocutors to push forward the discourse model.

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Clefted constituent | Cleft clause                                     |
| marg                | X ke mārā az faribkārihāye zendegi nejāt midahad |
| Referentially given | Referentially given                              |
| Relationally new    | Relationally new                                 |

**Table 1: Referential and relational givenness in (44)**

Now consider the informational pattern in (45), excerpted from *ruzegār-e separi šode-ye mardom-e sālخورde* ‘the bygone era of the senile people’ [Dowlatabadi 1998].

- (45) har do tā=šān      barādar-hā=(y)am      bud-and,      ham abdu=rā  
 each two CL=PC.3PL brother-PL=PC.1SG be.PAST-3PL also Abdus=OM  
 dust dāšt-am      va ham yadegār=rā      ke bad az      ān nāxuši ham  
 love have.PAST-1SG and also Yadegar=OM that after from that sickness also  
 nākār      shod      ke shod.      bad az      marg=e  
 inefficient become.PAST.3SG that become.PAST.3SG after from death=EZ  
 pedar=am,      **in barādar-hā=(y)am bud-and      ke man=rā**  
 father=PC.1SG this bother-PL=PC.1SG be.PAST-3PL that PN.1SG=OM  
**be yād=e      u      mi-andāxt-and.**      (p.31)  
 to memory=eZ PN.3SG IMPF-cast.PAST-3PL  
 ‘Both of them were my brothers; I loved both Abdus and Yadegar, who became  
 inefficient after that sickness. After my father’s death, it was my brothers who  
 reminded me of his memory.’

The cognitive status of the cleft clause is always referentially given. The cognitive status of the clefted constituent is referentially given too, as there are direct mentions of it in the previous sentences. The cleft clause material is relationally given because it is inferrable from the expression *bad az marg=e pedar-am* ‘after my father’s death’ that when a person passes away (specially a family member), his relative think of him after his death. Therefore, the proposition ‘x ke man=rā be yād=e u mi-andāxt-and’ is relationally given. In other words, the RC-proposition topicality is construed as pragmatically ratified/ accommodated. Arguably, the clefted constituent still holds a focus relation to the presupposed RC-proposition, hence relationally new. This type of sentence is the prototypical case of clefting (stressed focus *it*-clefts), for the cleft clause is both referentially and relationally given and the clefted constituent is relationally new. The primary stress falls on the clefted constituent.

Last but not the least, it is evident that RRG can explicitly formalize the expression of information structure with the help of actual focus domain, that is, the clefted constituent, no matter its referential coding, bears a new/focus relation to the RC-proposition, regardless of the mental or relational representation of the cleft clause.

|                     |                                      |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Clefted constituent | Cleft clause                         |
| barādar-hā=yam      | x ke man=rā be yād=e u mi-andāxt-and |
| Referentially given | Referentially given                  |
| Relationally new    | Relationally given                   |

**Table 2: Referential and relational givenness in (45)**

## 6. Information Structure-Syntax Interface in Cleft-like Constructions in Persian

In this part, an argument will be developed regarding the existence of two other constructions prevalent in Persian discourse which bears remarkable resemblance to Persian cleft constructions.

Extrapositional sentences are the hallmark of such affinity. This section argues that these two types of information packaging devices in Persian discourse can indeed be differentiated by the interaction of constituent projection and focus structure projection in the RRG theory. Both extraposition and clefting are thematically marked grammatical constructions with which the natural language users are provided the possibility to depart from the unmarked expression of sentences, e.g. clefting in Persian represents a markedly structuring of a non-focal argument as focal by placing it in the precopular position of a matrix clause. On the other hand, extraposition is moving a clause out of the subject domain and placing it sentence-finally. The structural similarity of these two can be represented in the following way, proposed by Calude (2008).

(46)

- a. Persian cleft sentence: (in) + clefted constituent + copula + cleft clause  
 b. Persian extraposed sentence: (in) + remainder predicate + copula + extraposed clause

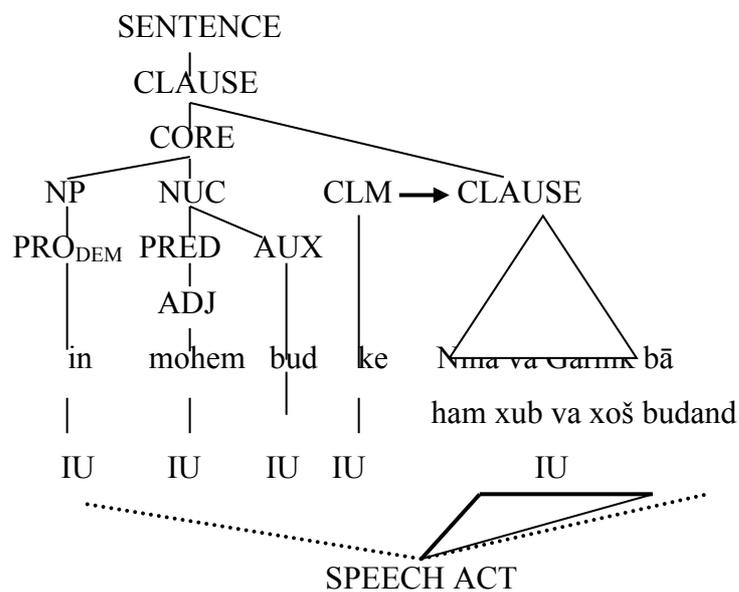
Here I present an example of extraposition in Persian, taken from *čērāqhā rā man xāmuš mikonam* ‘the lights, I’ll turn off’ [Pirzad 2001].

- (47) in mohem nabud ke ninā šelaxte ast va be qoul=e  
 this important NEG-be.PAST.3SG that Nina untidy be.PRES.3SG and to word=EZ  
 madar tu=(y)e xāne=aš šotor bā bār=aš gom  
 mother in=EZ house=PC.3SG camel with burden=PC.3SG lost  
 mi-sha-(v)ad. in mohem bud ke ninā va gārnik bā  
 IMPF-beome.PRES-3SG this important be.PAST.3SG that Nina and Garnik with  
**ham xub va xoš bud-and.** (P. 22)  
 together good and happy be.PAST-3PL  
 ‘It was not important that Nina is untidy and as her mother says, a camel with its  
 burden is lost in her house. It was important that Nina and Garnik are happy and  
 prosperous together.’

The ambiguity between clefting and extraposition can be solved in the first place via the information structure which is the reflection of their discourse functions. As already mentioned, clefts are focus marking devices, highlightening or contrasting bits of information, that is, they are in fact attention markers (Miller and Weinert 1998: 301). Extraposition, on the other hand, is associated with the avoidance of having complex subjects at the beginning of the sentence serving the two principles of end-focus and end-weight (Quirk et al. 1985: 863). Extraposition in principle patterns with the Given-Before-New principle (Gundel 1985; 1988) and also with the Communicative Dynamism proposed by the Prague School. For instance, in (47), the hearer’s mind has been previously impregnated with the presupposition that something is important and the speaker, because of the syntactic heaviness and a high degree of informativeness in the new element, finds it expedient to lighten the load of the element by ‘demoting’ it from the subject position to the end of the sentence. To follow up the above-mentioned

comment, I represent how the information is organized in (47) in figure 12 by using the syntactic and focus structure representations in RRG. The nexus-juncture relation in extraposition is daughter clausal subordination because the extraposed clause is both informationally and structurally dependent on the matrix clause whereas this relationship in clefts is of ad-core subordination alongside the cleft clause is placed in the periphery of the matrix clause.

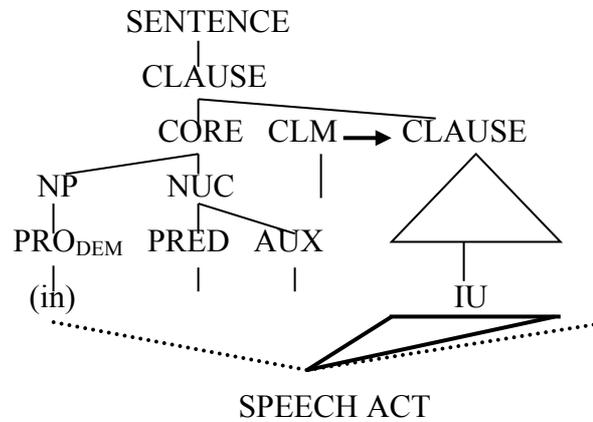
It was previously pointed out in (9) that the focus domain in complex sentences can extend over the subordinate clause if and only if the subordinate clause is the direct daughter of the clause node which is modified immediately by the IF operator. Figure 12 shows that the subordinate clause meets the condition and consequently, the focus domain encompasses the extraposed clause. More specifically, the actual focus domain falls upon it because it contains new information.



**Figure 12: Syntactic representation of Persian extraposed sentences along with the focus structure projection**

Extraposition accords with the Persian speakers’ communicative competence in the placement of the heavy complex NP to the end part of the sentence because processing a sentence starting off with a complex NP of strong informativeness would be high-cost for them communicatively.

This discourse strategy of Persian speaker can be stored in a syntactic template in which the extraposed clause lies in the actual focus domain. It is worth noting that ‘in’ has been treated as demonstrative in the syntactic template of extraposition in figure 13, while ‘in’ in clefting as emphatic in the syntactic template of clefting in figure 10.



**Figure 13: Syntactic template for Persian extraposed sentences along with the focus structure projection**

The point here is that the demonstrative in extraposed constructions functions as core argument, due to its agreement with the copula, but the emphatic element in the cleft constructions functions as a nominal adjunct in the NP periphery because of its agreement failure with the copula. The optional presence of demonstrative in extraposition is justified with the pro-drop parameter of Persian as a null subject language, while the optional presence of ‘*in*’ in the cleft sentences needs to be justified by the Persian speakers’ communicative competence to intensify the focus marking function of clefts. In other words, Persian syntax on one hand, prepares the grounds for the deictic ‘*in*’ in the extraposition to be interpreted anaphorically (i.e. the subject position of the demonstrative) and Persian discourse stylistics takes the responsibility to interpret ‘*in*’ in the clefting emphatically when it comes to the incapability of syntactic features (i.e. agreement failure of the emphatic).

The treatment of ‘*in*’ as demonstrative is also confirmed by Karimi (2005: 92). She suggests that subordinate extraposed clauses are indeed headed by an NP viz. the demonstrative *in*, as in (48). The obligatory presence of ‘*in*’ in (48b) and the possibility that the demonstrative in Persian can replace the whole DP, as demonstrated in (49), give evidence that *in* is an anaphoric expression in the subject position. From an RRG perspective, the sentence in (48a) is an example of daughter clausal subordination as it has been indicated in figure 12. The sentence in (48b), on the other hand, represents an example of ad-core NP subordination (Van Valin and Lapolla 1997:509) where the demonstrative is placed in the NUC<sub>N</sub> and the relative clause is adjoined to the CORE<sub>N</sub>. The layered structure of the clause in (48) is given in figures 14 and 15.

- (48) a. (in) vāzeh-e [CPke kimiya doxtar=e xubi-(y)e]. (Extraposition)  
 (this) clear-be.PRES.3SG that Kimiya girl=EZ good-be.PRES.3SG  
 ‘It is clear that Kimiya is a good girl.’  
 b. [DPin [CPke kimiya doxtar=e xubi-(y)e]] vāzeh-e. (Non-extraposition)  
 b’. \*[CPke kimiya doxtar=e xubi-(y)e] vāzeh-e

(49) in vāzeh-e.  
 this clear-be.PRES.3SG  
 ‘It is clear.’

Van Valin and Lapolla (1997: 527) assert that since the expletive pronoun contributes to the semantic interpretation of the sentence in the way that it refers to a *that*-clause outside the core, it must be a part of semantic representation. This is the case in the Persian extraposed construction where ‘*in*’ refers to the subordinate *ke*-clause; thus participates in the semantic representation whereas in Persian cleft construction, ‘*in*’ is not a part of semantic representation because of its very syntactically as well as semantically dummy nature, as discussed earlier. Further, the demonstrative indicates the function of the *ke*-clause as actor or undergoer. Logical structures of (48a) and (b) are given in (50) and (51) respectively.

(50) *be*’ ([3SG DEM<sub>i</sub>, [*be*’ (Kimiya, [ *good girl*’)]<sub>i</sub>], [*clear*’])

(51) *be*’ ([*be*’ (3SG DEM, [*be*’ (Kimiya, [*good girl*’)])], [*clear*’])

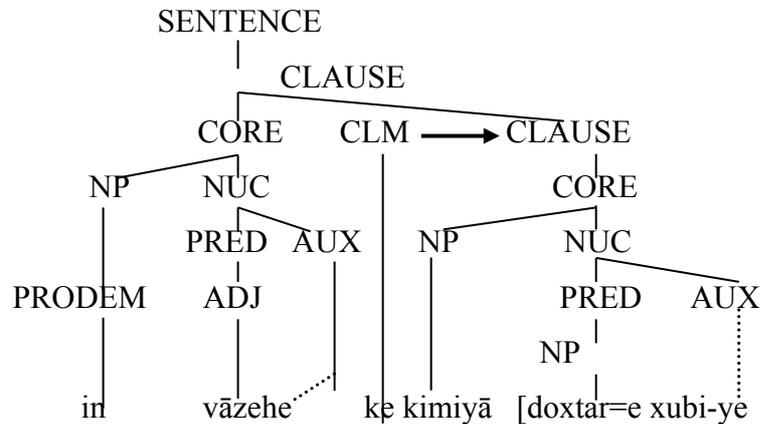


Figure 14: Daughter clausal subordination in extraposed sentences in Persian

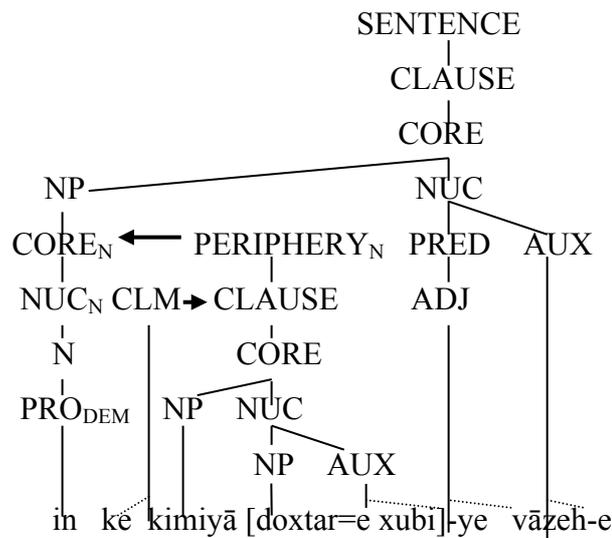


Figure 15: Ad-core NP subordination in Persian

To provide further proof in support of ‘*in*’ differentiation in the Persian cleft and extraposed constructions, I employ a transformational test, partly similar to the one proposed by Calude (2008), according to which the process of reinstating the extraposed clauses to its original position will result in grammaticality, while doing the same to the cleft clause will bring about ungrammaticality. Consider the reinstatement process in (48a), repeated below as (52), and in (11), repeated as (53).

(52) Reinstatement test:

in vāzeh-e ke kimiyā doxtar=e xubi-(y)e.

in ke kimiyā doxtar=e xubi-(y)e vāzeh-e. = grammatical result  $\implies$  Extraposition

(53) Reinstatement test:

in farhād bud ke širin=rā dust dāšt.

?? in ke širin=rā dust dāšt farhād bud. = ungrammatical result  $\implies$  Clefting

One might claim that the result of the reinstatement test on (53) is acceptable, but a far closer look reveals that its oddity will be removed if we take the sentence in (54) into consideration. In other words, the grammatical form is a pseudocleft sentence.

(54) un ke širin=rā dust dāšt farhād bud.  
 that that Shirin=OM love have.PAST.3SG Farhad be.PAST.3SG  
 ‘The one who loved Shirin was Farhad.’

Aside from the extrapositional sentences, other sentences can be found bearing structural similarity to the cleft sentences. Again, this is information structure that can help us distinguish between them although syntactic features sometimes prove helpful. Consider the examples in (55) and (56).

(55) a. vasat=e rāhrou bud- $\emptyset$  ke nedā zang zad.  
 middle=EZ doorway be.PAST-3SG that Neda ring hit.PAST.3SG  
 ‘It was in the middle of the doorway that Neda Rang.’

(56) vasat=e rāhrou bud-**am** ke nedā zang zad  
 Middle=EZ doorway be.PAST-1SG that Neda rang.  
 ‘When I was in the middle of the doorway, Neda Rang’

The only criterion which enables us to distinguish between the two sentences is the bound morpheme marked on the copula. In (55), the agreement marker is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person zero morpheme, indicated here for the clarity sake, while it is overt 1<sup>st</sup> person morpheme. According to the formulization of cleft constructions, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person agreement morphology signals that a PP or an ADV has been clefted. As for (56), I consider it to be a kind of fronted adverbial construction, representing a sentential subordination which involves sentences or clauses occurring in the right- or left-detached position (Van Valin 2005: 192). The relation between of the adverbial subordinate clause to the core it modifies is the same as that of a peripheral PP modifying a core. Therefore, since a fronted peripheral PP occurs in the LDP, a fronted adverbial clause can appear, by comparison, in the same position. Van Valin and Lapolla (1997: 228) argue that the elements in the LDP are always topical; hence

outside of the actual focus domain. Regarding all this, I represent the syntactic and focus structure of (55) in figure 16 together with the semantic representations of the two sentences in (57) and (58).

(57)

be' ([be-LOC' (x<sub>i</sub>, [do' (Neda, [ring' (Neda))])])<sub>j</sub>), [be-in middle of' (rāhrou, y<sub>j</sub>)]<sub>i</sub>)

(58)

be-in middle of' ([rāhrou, 1SG]), [do' (Neda, [ring' (Neda)])])

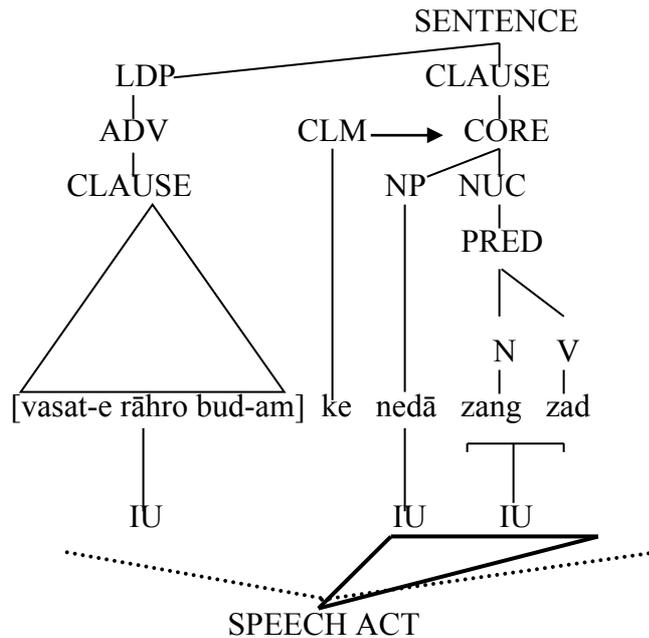


Figure 16: Information structure-syntax interface in Persian fronted adverbial

The potential focus domain in figure 16 does not extend over the fronted adverbial clause because it is not the direct daughter of the clause immediately dominated by IF operator. The actual focus domain falls on the whole clause, that is, any item in it can be actually brought into focus. Crucially, *ke* appears to be able to emphasize any NP or the entire clause in Persian as an emphatic (Windfuhr 1979: 71).

### 7. Grammatical Relations and Constructional Schemas in Persian clefts

RRG takes a somewhat different view of grammatical relations, which are defined in terms of the neutralization of semantic macroroles for syntactic reasons in specific constructions. To begin with, I get into the determination of the PSA in sentences in which NPs are clefted. Since clefts consist of two clauses, it seems that each has its own PSA.

In Persian cleft constructions, there is a neutralization with respect to the omitted argument in the subordinate cleft clause, i.e. both actor and undergoer can be regarded as PSA, for either can function as clefted constituent. This means the PSA in the cleft constructions is a syntactic pivot. Given that *in* cannot occur when the clefted constituent is not an NP, and it is optional with clefted NPs, it would be best to take the form without *in* as basic.

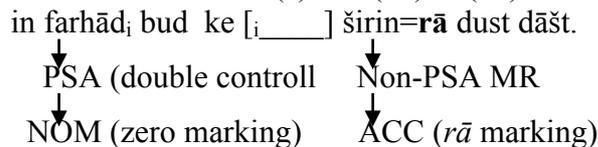
- (59) a. farzād<sub>i</sub> bud ke [<sub>i</sub>\_\_\_\_] xaste šod. (Undergoer of an intransitive verb)  
 Farzad be.PAST.3SG that tired become.PAST.3SG  
 ‘It was Farzad who became tired.’
- b. mehrdād<sub>i</sub> bud ke [<sub>i</sub>\_\_\_\_] dar raft. (Actor of an intransitive verb)  
 Mehrdad be.PAST.3SG that PREV go.PAST.3SG  
 ‘It was Mehrdad who ran away.’
- c. farhād<sub>i</sub> bud ke [<sub>i</sub>\_\_\_\_] sar=eš=o šekast. (Actor of a transitive verb)  
 Farhad be.PAST.3SG that head=PC.3SG=OM break.PAST.3SG  
 ‘It was Farhad who broke his head.’
- d. nedā<sub>i</sub> bud ke bačče-hā [<sub>i</sub>\_\_\_\_] mi-zad-an=eš  
 (Undergoer of a transitive verb)  
 Neda be.PAST.3SG that kid-PL IMPF-hit.PAST-3PL=PC.3SG  
 ‘It was Neda that the kids hit.’

The clefted constituent, however, is a double controller because it controls both the core-internal phenomenon viz. verb agreement in the matrix clause, and it controls the interpretation of the missing argument in the linked core. As for the PSA when the clefted constituent is a prepositional phrase or an adverbial, I claim that there is no PSA in the matrix clause because PSAs must be core-level phenomena, and also because the agreement is not marked on the copula (unless the clefted constituent is an argument adjunct prepositional phrase). The cleft clause yet has a PSA which controls the verb agreement in it. I discussed earlier that ‘in’ in NP-clefted constructions performs emphatically as the copula fails to agree with it; thus I can lay down the following rules with respect to case assignment in Persian cleft constructions.

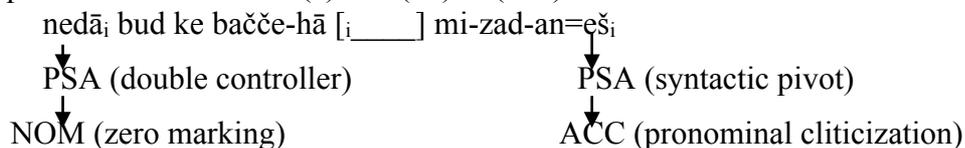
(60) Case marking rules for Persian NP-clefted constituent constructions:

- PSA: double syntactic controller in the matrix core and syntactic pivot (the missing argument)
- a. Matrix core  
 Assign nominative case to the PSA, which is zero marked (even if the emphatic *in* is present).
- b. Linked core
1. Assign accusative case (=rā) to the non-PSA macrorole in the linked core when it is not identical with the PSA in the matrix core, or
  2. assign accusative case (pronominal cliticization) to the PSA in the linked core (syntactic pivot) when it is identical with the PSA in the matrix core (a pronominal clitic appears on the subordinate predicator, coindexed with the PSA in the matrix core).

(61) Application of the rules in (a) and (b1) to (11):



(62) Application of the rule in (a) and (b2) to (59d)



Interestingly, the PSA in the matrix core turns out to be a ‘triple controller’: it controls the verb agreement in the matrix core, it controls the syntactic pivot in the linked core, and finally it controls the cross-reference with the pronominal clitic on the linked verbal core. To summarize the representation of the syntactic, morphological, semantic, and pragmatic features along with the nexus-juncture linkage type of the cleft types, a constructional schema is presented below for each of Persian cleft constructions.

---

**Construction: Persian cleft construction with an NP as the clefted constituent**

---

Syntax:

- Juncture: core
- Nexus: subordination
- Construction type: Specificational
- Unit template(s): Optional emphatic ‘*in*’, pragmatic predicate, copula, cleft clause
- PSA: double controller in the matrix core and syntactic pivot in the linked core

---

Morphology:

- Ke*: optional in informal register
- Copula: agrees with the clefted constituent both in number and person
- in*: a discourse strategy highlighting the focus marking function of the construction

---

Semantics:

- Specifying a value for a variable with respect to the logical structure  
**be’** ([pred’ (...x<sub>i</sub>...)], y<sub>i</sub>);  
*y* is the pragmatic predicate coindexed with the unspecified value in the variable

---

Pragmatics:

- Illocutionary force: unspecified
- Focus structure: narrow focus on the clefted constituent (NUC of matrix core) or element(s) within it

---

**Table 3: Constructional template for Persian NP-clefted constituent construction**

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**Construction: Persian cleft construction with a PP or an ADV as the clefted constituent**

---

Syntax:

- Juncture: core
- Nexus: subordination
- Construction type: Specificational
- Unit template(s): pragmatic predicate, copula, cleft clause,
- PSA: syntactic controller in the linked core

---

Morphology:

- Ke*: optional in informal register
- Copula: default 3<sup>rd</sup> singular morphology

---

Semantics:

- Specifying a value for a variable with respect to the logical structure  
**be’** ([pred’ (...x<sub>i</sub>...)], y<sub>i</sub>);  
*y* is the pragmatic predicate coindexed with the unspecified value in the variable

---

Pragmatics:

- Illocutionary force: unspecified
- Focus structure: narrow focus on the clefted constituent (NUC of matrix core) or element(s) within it

---

**Table 4: Constructional template for Persian PP- or ADV-clefted constituent construction**

## 8. Conclusion

This paper was devoted to the analysis of Persian cleft constructions which had not received much attention in the literature. It was delineated that that RRG can clear up unambiguously the complexity of Persian clefts as asymmetrical grammatical constructions the semantic and syntactic properties of which are not compositionally iconic.

Firstly, I went through the syntactic structure of Persian clefts and illustrated that the copula and the cleft emphatic pronoun are in fact syntactic devices that bring into focus a semantic argument of the cleft clause. ‘*in*’ in the structure of clefts is an emphatic marker which does not modify the syntactic structure of the sentence because of its disagreement with the copula, but it contributes to the informational account of the construction. Therefore, I ended up with the appreciation that emphatic and anaphoric ‘*in*’ in Persian discourse should be distinguished, as Dabir Moghddam (1992) speaks of the necessity to differentiate between the syntactic behaviour of the postposition *rā* as the marker of definite direct objects and its discourse function as the marker of secondary topicalization.

I also mentioned that the clefted constituent can be NPs, PPs, and ADVs, although the emphatic marker is omitted if the clefted constituent is a PP or an ADV and the agreement default morphology appears as 3<sup>rd</sup> singular. The logical structure of Persian clefts represented explicitly the specificational function in the semantic structure through the coindexation of the second argument of the specificational predicate with an element in the logical structure of the embedded predicate. Despite that the clefted constituent is a semantic argument, interpreted referentially in the logical structure of the cleft clause; it has a predicative function playing as pragmatic predicate in the information structure of the cleft sentence. This absolutely originates from the non-isomorphic nature of the cleft constructions. Persian clefts align with the communicative competence of the speakers in the markedly expressing of the propositions that otherwise can be understood as the unmarked subject-predicate ordering; consequently, the clefted constituent bears a narrow focus relation to the proposition contained in the cleft clause. It was also discussed that the taking a constructional account towards the extraposed and fronted-adverbial sentences which are structurally akin to Persian clefts can shed light on the different patterns of information packaging in these sentences.

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