4

The Syntax of It-clefts and the Left Periphery of the Clause

LILIANE HAEGEMAN, ANDRÉ MEINUNGER,

AND ALEKSANDRA VERCAUTEREN

1 Background

In this paper we evaluate two cartographic analyses of English *it*-clefts.[1] Based on the similarity of the interpretation of *it*-clefts and focus fronting, both derive *it*-clefts by multiple movements to the "left periphery." The two analyses differ in terms of the landing site of the cleft focus: in one approach, which we will call the "embedded" approach, the focus of the cleft remains inside the cleft relative, in the "matrix" analysis the focus of the cleft is moved to the matrix domain and the copula is analyzed as a defective element that does not fully project a clausal domain.

In this introductory section we briefly introduce those components of cartography which will be relevant for the argumentation. Readers familiar with cartography can skip this part.

[1] Liliane Haegeman's research is funded by FWO: 2009-Odysseus-Haegeman-G091409. André Meinunger's work was supported (in part) by Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF) (Grant Nr. 01UG0711). Aleksandra Vercauteren's research is funded by FWO grant FWO11/ASP/258.

This paper was presented by Liliane Haegeman at the linguistics department of the University of Geneva and at the annual meeting of the Linguistics Association of Great Britain (LAGB, Manchester) in September 2011. Thanks to the audiences for discussion. Thanks to David Adger, Carsten Breul, Denis Delfitto, Karen Lahousse, Neil Smith, Genoveva Puskas, Matthew Reeve, Amélie Rocquet, and Ur Shlonsky for comments on previous versions of this paper. Needless to say, we remain solely responsible for the final form of our paper.

1.1 THE LEFT PERIPHERY RIZZI 1997

Rizzi (1997) decomposes the CP layer into a sequence of hierarchically organized functional heads, which encode topic and focus information as in (1a). Focused constituents to the left of the subject occupy SpecFocP (1b), and topicalized constituents occupy SpecTopP (1c). In root questions the fronted *wh*-phrase, that is, the focus of the question, also moves to SpecFocP (1d). Haegeman (2000a, 2000b, 2012) and Radford (2009a, 2009b) propose that negative inversion in English targets SpecFocP (1e).

(1) a. ForceP > TopP* > FocP > TopP* > FinP > TP (Rizzi 1997)
b. [$_{\text{FocP}}$ FIDO [$_{\text{FinP}}$ they named their dog]] (Molnár and Winkler 2010)
c. [$_{\text{TopP}}$ Their dog, [$_{\text{FinP}}$ they have named Fido.]]
d. [$_{\text{FocP}}$ What is] [$_{\text{FinP}}$ [$_{\text{IP}}$ it ~~is what~~]]]?
e. [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ [$_{\text{FocP}}$ At no point had [$_{\text{FinP}}$ he been conscious of the problem]]].

1.2 THE ARTICULATED LEFT PERIPHERY: FURTHER REFINEMENTS

Rizzi (2001) postulates a functional projection IntP, whose head hosts the interrogative conjunction (Italian *se*, "if") and whose specifier hosts the *wh*-phrases *why* and *how come* and their analogues in other languages. For reasons of space we cannot provide the evidence here but we refer to his paper.

(2) ForceP > TopP* > IntP > TopP* > FocP > TopP* > FinP > TP

It has also been proposed that the recursive TopP should be reinterpreted in terms of specialized topic projections that host a range of topical constituents. Again we refer to the literature (Benincà and Poletto 2004; Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Bianchi and Frascarelli 2009).

1.3 CRITERIAL FREEZING

A second ingredient of the cartographic model is "criterial freezing," defined in (3). Given (3), a *wh*-constituent that has moved to a left-peripheral landing site to satisfy an interpretive requirement cannot move to a higher position. Thus in (4), once *which book* has moved to the embedded left periphery to encode the interrogative Force (4a), it is frozen in place.

(3) Criterial Freezing:

A phrase meeting a Criterion is frozen in place. (Rizzi 2012: II, 5, (22))

(4) a. Bill wonders [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ which book [she read t]]
b. * Which book does Bill wonder [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ t [she read t]]?

1.4 AIM OF THIS PAPER

There is a consensus in the literature that *it*-clefts such as (5) convey a specific organization of information structure: in (5a) "the cat" is the focus of the sentences and the proposition "Mary saw something" is presupposed, that is, it corresponds to backgrounded ("topical") information. Though not identical in interpretation, the *it*-cleft (5a) is interpretively similar to (5b), in which the object *THE CAT* has been fronted, by hypothesis to the left-peripheral (abbreviated as LP) FocP.

(5) a. It was THE CAT that Mary saw.
b. THE CAT Mary saw.

(5a) also shares some of its interpretation with the interrogative (5c), in that in both the proposition "Mary saw something" is presupposed:

(5) c. What did Mary see?

Finally there is also a commonality between the pattern in (5a), and relative clauses as in (5d): both instantiate "noninterrogative *wh*" (in the sense of Authier and Reed 2005).

(5) d. I know the CAT that Mary saw.

2 Two analyses of clefts

2.1 THE MIDDLEFIELD ANALYSIS

Two cartographic analyses are available for the derivation of *it*-clefts. In what we will call the "embedded" analysis,[2] Belletti (2004, 2009, 2011) derives *it*-clefts by A'-movement of the cleft focus to the specifier of FocP in the cleft relative. The following are the core elements of her proposal:

(i) *it*-clefts are biclausal throughout the derivation: *be* projects a clausal domain (TP1), the cleft relative is an embedded clausal projection (TP2).
(ii) The subject pronoun *it* occupies the canonical subject position, SpecTP1.

[2] For Belletti clefts used for new information focus have a slightly different derivation. We do not go into this here.

(iii) The cleft constituent is located within a clausal complement of *be*.
(iii) The derivation of clefts comprises an instantiation of *wh*-movement within the cleft relative (here TP2).
(iv) A lower portion of the cleft relative (FinP in (6)) is (obligatorily) extraposed. The analysis aligns the syntax of the relative DP with that of an extraposed clause, in line with, among others, Akmajian (1970) and Emonds (1976); see Reeve (2011) for a survey.

Figure 4.1 summarizes Belletti's (2009) derivation.

(6) $[_{TP1}$ it be $[_{vP}$ ~~be~~ $[_{FocP}$ the CAT $[_{FinP}$ that $[_{TP2}$ Mary saw ~~the cat~~$]]]]]$

Figure 4.1 Derivation of *it*-clefts in Belletti (2009)

The cleft focus in (6) occupies a specifier of FocP, capturing interpretive similarities with focus fronting (5b); at the same time, the derivation also shows a parallelism with that of relative clauses (5d).

2.2 THE LEFT PERIPHERAL ANALYSIS

Some authors (Meinunger 1997, 1998; Frascaralli and Ramaglia 2009, 2013; and Sleeman 2011) have proposed that in both (5a) and (5b) the focused constituent is moved to the matrix LP. We will label these analyses "matrix" analyses. Though the precise executions of the idea vary considerably, the analyses share the following properties:

(i) the focused constituent is in the specifier of FocP in the matrix LP;
(ii) the pronoun subject (*it*) and the copula *be* are located in a projection dominating FocP.

2.2.1 Meinunger (1997, 1998): it-clefts are monosentential

Meinunger proposes the derivation in (7) (Figure 4.2).[3] Unfortunately, Meinunger's analysis remains programmatic and a full evaluation is therefore difficult. The drawbacks that we will point out for high analysis in sections 3, 4, and 5 also arise for his analysis.

[3] (i) from Sleeman (2011), provided there without discussion, is similar to Meinunger's (7).
(i) $[_{Top}$ It is $[_{Foc}$ John] that I saw]] (Sleeman 2011: her (17))

(7)

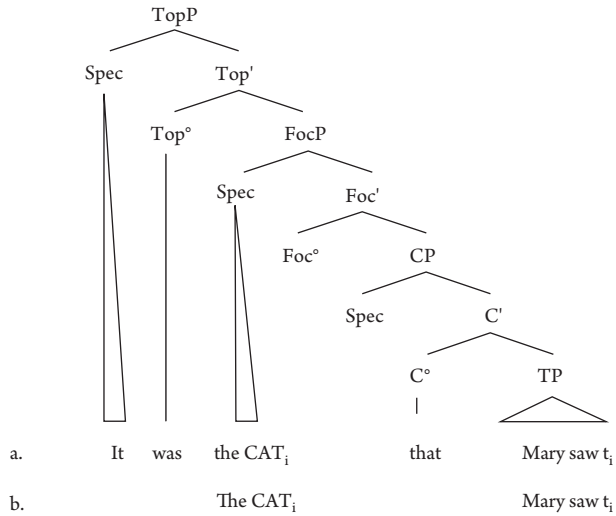

Figure 4.2 Derivation of *it*-clefts in Meinunger (1997, 1998)

The main attraction of such a matrix account, next to a potential solution for some connectivity issues, is that the similarity in interpretation between (5a) and (5b) is read off from the representation: in (7a), the representation of (5a), *the* CAT occupies SpecFocP, just as it does in (7b), the representation of (5b).

2.2.2 Frascarelli and Ramaglia (2013)

Frascarelli and Ramaglia (2013) fully elaborate the high analysis that is reminiscent of Meinunger's analysis. The core ingredients of their analysis are listed in the following text.

(i) the clefted XP (i.e., the focus *the* CAT) starts out as the predicate of a small clause whose subject is *it*;
(ii) this small clause is the complement of the copula, which is a linker in the sense of den Dikken 2006 (see Frascarelli and Ramaglia 2013: 4, note 4, and section 2), in I;
(iii) the subject of the SC, *it*, moves to SpecIP.

(8) $[_{IP}$ it is $[_{SC}$ t_{it} $[_{NP}$ the cat]]]

(iv) The presupposed relative clause (= *that Mary saw*) is treated as extraposed material and merged as the specifier of an LP FamP (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl [2007]; Bianchi and Frascarelli [2010]).

(9) a. $[_{FamP}$ [that Mary saw] $[_{IP}$ it is $[_{SC}$ t_{it} $[_{NP}$ the cat]]]]

(v) The SC predicate *the* CAT, the focus of the cleft, is attracted to the LP FocP dominating the matrix IP.[4]

(9) b. $[_{FocP}$ $[_{NP}$ the CAT] $[_{FamP}$ [*that you saw*] $[_{IP}$ it is $[_{SC}$ t_{it} t_{NP}]]]]

(vi) The remnant IP, from which the focus of the cleft has been evacuated, moves to an LP projection dominating FocP that, following Poletto and Pollock (2004), is identified as "GroundP," a specialized projection hosting backgrounded material expressing presupposed information (cf. Frascarelli and Ramaglia 2013: 18, note 31). The appeal to GP captures the interpretive similarity of *it*-cleft with *wh*-questions such as (5d) in which the content of IP "Mary saw something" is also presupposed.

(9) c. $[_{GP}$ $[_{IP}$ it is $[_{sc}$ t_{it} t_{NP}]] $[_{FocP}$ $[_{NP}$ the cat] $[_{FamP}$ $[_{DP}$ [sc $[_{NP}$ pro] $[_{CP}$ that Mary saw]]] t_{IP}]]]

The outcome of the matrix derivation is that the components of the clause built around *be* are redistributed in the "matrix" LP.

Figure 4.3 summarizes Frascarelli & Ramaglia's (2013) derivation:

(9)

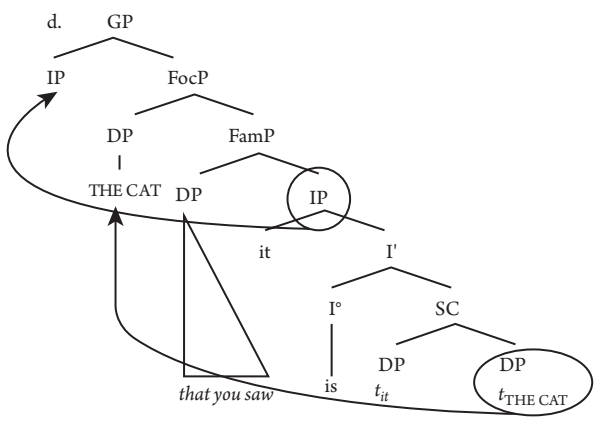

Figure 4.3 Derivation of *it*-clefts in Frascarelli & Ramaglia (2013)

[4] The focused constituent moves either to SpecFocP or SpecContrP depending on whether it acts as an *information* or a *contrastive* Focus, respectively (Frascarelli and Ramaglia 2013: 19, note 32). This point is not elaborated in great detail in Frascarelli and Ramaglia (2013), see Belletti (2004, 2009, 2011). In the paper cited, the projection hosting the clefted phrase is simply indicated as FocP. We follow this here.

The authors develop a similar analysis for Italian *it*-clefts. The focus of our discussion is Frascarelli and Ramaglia's analysis of English *it*-clefts, but our reservations extend to Italian.

Frascarelli and Ramaglia postulate a number of movements to the LP, but do not discuss the locality restrictions, if any, regulating these movements. For instance, like CLLD in Romance or like sentence-initial adjuncts in English (Haegeman and Ürögdi 2010; Haegeman 2012), the LP relative clause *that Mary saw* does not cause intervention effects for the A'-movement of the cleft focus *the* CAT. Similarly, the remnant IP crosses both the relative cleft *that Mary saw* in the FamP as well as the focused constituent. We return to this point briefly in section 4.

In what follows we examine word order variations in *it*-clefts and show that the high analyses in (7) and (9), rather than being more economical in terms of a uniform matching of form and interpretation—with a unique landing site hosting fronted foci, fronted *wh*-phrases and cleft constituents—lead to complications. Anticipating the discussion, the problems identified are of three types:

(i) the observed word order variations in English clefts can only be captured by a reduplication of Rizzi's original LP structure with a specialized FocP for clefts, which—at least for some instances—raises questions about the criterial freezing (3). This is dealt with in section 3.
(ii) (9) does not predict the interaction between sentential negation and clefting as observed in Rizzi (1993, 2010). This is dealt with in section 4.
(iii) (9), which takes clefts to be an LP phenomenon like focus movement, leads to the incorrect prediction that clefting and focus movement have the same distribution.

3 Internal syntax: moving the cleft focus

(10) contains examples in which the cleft focus is moved leftward: (10a) displays *wh*-movement: (10b) illustrates focusing of the cleft-focus. Both patterns lead to important questions for the matrix analysis of *it*-.

(10) a. What was it ____ that you saw?
b. % The dog it was ____ that died.

3.1 WH MOVEMENT OF THE *CLEFT*ED XP

(11) illustrates additional instances of *wh*-movement in it-clefts. (11a–e) are root *wh*-questions, (11f) is an embedded *wh*-question, (11g) and (11h) are

exclamatives, (11i) is a relative, (11j) is a free relative, (11k), from Frascarelli and Ramaglia's paper, illustrates *wh*-movement of the cleft focus in Italian.

(11) a. What was it ___ that you saw?
b. When was it ___ that you met him for the first time?
c. Who was it ___ that you were going to invite?
d. How many papers was it ___ that you had to read?
e. How good a player is it ___ that you find him? (Declerck 1988, his (48a))
f. It could help you focus on what it is ___you want. (*Guardian* 4.6.11, p. 7, col. 3)
g. How happy it is ___that she looks! (Declerck 1988: 197 (47a))[5]
h. What a glorious bonfire it was ___ you made! (Quirk et al. 1985: 1386)
i. This is the woman whose job it is that I am applying for.
j. Whoever it was that told you this. . .
k. *Chi è (stato) ___ che ha rotto il vaso?*
who be.3sg be.ptcp ___ that have.3sg break.PTCP the vase
"Who is it that broke the vase?" (Frascarelli and Ramaglia 2009: 5: (84a))

For root *wh*-questions it is assumed that the fronted *wh*-phrase targets the LP FocP (1d).[6] In (10), the cleft focus in a declarative *it*-cleft occupies the LP Spec-FocP. In (11a–e), the cleft focus ends up in a position to the left of the string *it* + *be*, meaning that it must occupy a position higher than GP. One option would be to invoke IntP, the projection postulated for *yes-no* questions (2), but IntP was specifically introduced to distinguish *yes-no* questions and *wh*-questions introduced by *why* and its equivalents from other *wh*-questions. Generalizing all *wh*-movement to IntP abolishes that distinction.

(12) $[_{\text{ForceP}}$ $[_{\text{IntP}}$ what $[_{\text{Int}}$ was$]$ $[_{\text{GP}}$ [it ~~was se~~$]$ $[_{\text{FocP}}$ ~~what~~ [that you saw]]]]]

[5] For Andrew Radford (11g, h) are "nonnative like." We will not consider them in our analysis.

[6] Rizzi (2001) shows that in Italian *wh*-elements in root questions cannot co-occur with a focus, in either order: the incompatibility of *wh*-fronting and focus is interpreted as showing that *wh*-elements in root questions move to SpecFocP, and hence compete with focused constituents.

[i.] a. * A chi QUESTO hanno detto (non qualcos'altro)?
"To whom THIS they said (not something else)?"
b. * QUESTO a chi hanno detto (non qualcos'altro)?
"THIS to whom they said (not something else)?"

One may come up with alternatives, but as far as we can see, the implication of such proposals will always be that *wh*-fronting and *wh*-inversion in root clauses are no longer homogeneous: the same *wh*-constituent (e.g., *what*) targets SpecFocP in (1d) and moves higher in (12); in the two derivations the movement of the same *wh*-constituents triggers subject auxiliary inversion. The question arises whether thereexists independent motivation for postulating different landing sites for the *wh*-constituents in root *wh*-interrogative (12) and that in root *wh*-interrogative (1d).

Criterial freezing (3) raises the question how in the cleft the focused *wh*-constituent in (12) can move from the FocP to the higher projection. Because the *wh*-constituent precedes the pronoun *it*, it must have moved across the fronted clausal remnant in the GroundP. It is (again) not clear which locality conditions determine these movements.

3.2 NEGATIVE INVERSION

It-clefts are compatible with negative inversion. If, following Frascarelli and Ramaglia, the cleft focus occupies SpecFocP, in (13a) *on no account*, the fronted LP negative PP triggering SAI cannot be located in SpecFocP. Thus, we need to postulate an additional LP projection to host the negative constituent whose head hosts the inverted auxiliary. One option would be that there is an LP projection dedicated to sentential polarity (cf. Laka 1990; Progovac 1994), as in (13b):

(13) a. % On no account should it be the STUDENTS who are correcting these papers!
b. [$_{\text{PolP}}$ On no account should [$_{\text{GroundP}}$ it ~~should~~ be [$_{\text{FocP}}$ the students [who are correcting these papers]]]]

However, if negative inversion targets PolP rather than FocP, the distributional parallelisms between focusing and negative inversion that underlie the analyses in Haegeman (2000a, 2000b) and Radford (2009a, 2009b) are no longer captured.

3.3 FOCUSING THE CLEFT FOCUS

The data discussed in sections 4.1 and 4.2 led to the conclusion that to maintain the matrix analysis of *it*-clefts, we need to postulate a higher landing site for fronted *wh*-phrases as well as a specialized LP position for negative inversion, leading to a complication of the cartography of the LP and a loss of parallelism: focus fronting, negative inversion, and the fronting of the cleft focus are no longer homogeneous. These complications have to be integrated into the cartography of

LP, a point not envisaged by Meinunger (1997, 1998) or Frascarelli and Ramaglia (2009, 2013).

In (10b) and in (14), the focus of the *it*-cleft has moved to an initial position. For Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1420), this movement is motivated by focusing requirements (also Dryer 1996: 494–5 and Halliday 1967: 237).[7] (14d–e) are attested.

(14) a. Was it SUE who polished off the cookies?
No, PAT it was who ate them. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 1420, (21))

b. JOHN it was that Mary saw. (Reeve 2011: (94a))

c. Me it is that you saw?!!!!! (Andrew Radford, personal communication)

d. [Arsenal] needed someone to pick them up. Van Persie it was who stepped forward to get them back on their feet. (*Observer* 25.11, page 27, col. 1)

e. This led her to nothing better than isolation, ever more at a loss, on an island in the middle of Marylebone Road. Then it was that she decided to view in daylight the street in which she had said goodbye to Stella. (Elizabeth Bowen, *The Heat of the Day*. London: Vintage Books, 291–2)

In matrix accounts, (14a) would presumably be derived as in (15): the cleft focus is moved up to a higher focus position.

(15) [$_{\text{FocP}}$ The DOG [$_{\text{GroundP}}$ it was [$_{\text{FocP}}$ ~~the dog~~ [that died] . . .]]]

This representation is problematic for a number of reasons. First of all we seem to need two LP focus projections that are simultaneously activated, while it is often assumed (Rizzi 1997) that the LP FocP is unique. One way out might be to conclude that the landing site of the fronted focused cleft constituent in (15) IS the "Rizzian" SpecFocP in (1a) (see section 5 for additional evidence). This approach could extend to the *wh*-fronting of the cleft focus in 3.1 and to negative fronting in 3.2, which would uniformly target the same FocP, in line with earlier analyses. In (16) we label this focus projection as FocP1 and the lower landing site of the cleft focus in (10) is SpecFocP2. Observe that in (16) the landing site of the *it*-cleft focus explicitly is not the LP SpecFocP in (1a): it is a lower LP focus position. This undermines the arguments of economy and interpretive parallelism that seemed to be the basis of matrix analyses in (7) and (10). Moreover the relation of FocP2 to the articulated LP remains to be worked out.

[7] Not all informants accept this pattern.

(16) a. [$_{FocP1}$ what [$_{Foc}$ was] [$_{GroundP}$ [it ~~was sc~~] [$_{FocP2}$ ~~what~~ [that you saw]]]]
b. [$_{FocP1}$ On no account should [$_{GroundP}$ it ~~should~~ be [$_{FocP2}$ the students [who are correcting these papers]]]]
c. [$_{FocP1}$ The DOG [$_{GroundP}$ [it was ~~[sc]]~~ [$_{FocP2}$ ~~the dog~~ [that died]]]]

(16c) still raises the question of criterial freezing. It remains unclear why the moved IP does not block the movement of the focused constituents in (16).

4 Intervention effects in GP: Negative islands and clefts

Rizzi (1993, 2010) shows that the cleft focus can be *wh*-moved (17b) and a cleft sentence can be negative (17c), but in a negative sentence the cleft focus cannot be *wh*-moved (17d). Rizzi gives similar patterns from Italian, French, and Hebrew.

(17) a. It is JOHN that we should help.
b. Who is it ____ that we should help?
c. It is not JOHN that we should help.
d. *Who is it not ____ that we should help?[8]

Rizzi says:

> There is nothing wrong with the interpretation of the starred variants of these sentences, were they grammatical they would have a perfectly sensible meaning: "Which individual x is such that it isn't x that we should help?" So there appears to be a structural ban against questioning negative clefts. (Rizzi 1993: 371–3)

Rizzi (1993) analyzes the incompatibility of the *wh*-fronting of the *it*-cleft with negation in terms of the inner island created by sentential negation (cf. Ross 1984) as illustrated in (18): in (18a) *why* can be construed with the lower clause. In (18b) *why* cannot be construed with the lower clause:

(18) a. Why did you say that John had been fired?
b. Why did you not say that John had been fired?

From the matrix analyses of *it*-clefts as in Meinunger (1997, 1998) and in Frascarelli and Ramaglia (2009, 2013), it does not follow in any obvious way that

[8] As pointed out by Andrew Radford, such examples can be made acceptable in the appropriate context in which there is a specific set of entities accessible in the discourse targeted by the *wh*-phrase. This is as expected because in that case the D-linking effect will overcome the negative island. See Starke (2001), Rizzi (2004).

the sentential negation within the fronted remnant IP will block the movement of the clefted constituent. Meinunger assumes that the copula does not give rise to a full clausal structure, but does not go into the details. Frascarelli and Ramaglia say:

> For the sake of simplicity, we indicate the functional projection containing the copula as IP. However, given the analysis provided for copulas in (pseudo)cleft constructions [...] the functional structure of the IP projection should be conceived as reduced. The extent of the relevant reduction is dependent on the degree of grammaticalization reached by the copula.
> (Frascarelli and Ramaglia 2009: 21, note 35)

If sentential negation is encoded somewhere in an IP-internal NegP, then this will not c-command the (*wh*) focus of the cleft sentence. One option to ensure that negation in the remnant IP can block *wh*-movement of the cleft focus would be to propose that the relevant projection is actually "PolP," with the head Pol as the locus of sentential negation, and PolP dominating IP. This entails that the remnant constituent is certainly not structurally truncated because PolP is usually taken to be a high projection (Laka 1990; Progovac 1994).

For informants who accept it (cf. (14), section 3.3), focusing of the cleft focus is also sensitive to negative islands, suggesting that its feature content is similar to that of a fronted *wh*-phrase.

(19) a. *John it was not that they had invited.
b. *John it never was that they invited (it was always his sister).

5 The distribution of *it*-clefts

5.1 INFINITIVAL CONTEXTS

If *it*-clefts are derived by "regular" focus and topic movements to the LP, then all things being equal, domains where such movements are known to be unavailable or degraded should be incompatible with *it*-clefts. English infinitival clauses are a case in point: they are incompatible with argument fronting. This is because they lack an LP altogether, or because there are restrictions on their LP. (i) *For* clauses are illustrated in (20a), (ii) ECM environments in (20b), and (iii) infinitival complements in (20c).

(20) a. *For THIS PROJECT John to be in charge of would be unexpected.
b. *I believe THIS PROJECT John to have been in charge of at the time.
c. *Don't let THIS PROJECT John be in charge of.

Though incompatible with argument movement to the LP, infinitival clauses remain fully compatible with *it*-clefting. This is unexpected under the matrix analysis according to which the cleft focus is moved to the LP.

(21) a. For it to be JOHN who is in charge would be rather unexpected.
b. I believe it to have been JOHN who was in charge at the time.
c. Don't let [it be YOU that gets arrested].

One might rescue the matrix analysis by postulating that in nonfinite clauses the focus of the *it*-cleft is moved into the matrix finite domain, with remnant movement of a larger chunk. (22a) is a simplified representation: the cleft relative *who was in charge* is moved to the LP FamP associated with the IP projected on the verb *believe*, the cleft focus *JOHN* is moved to the dominating FocP, and the fronted remnant IP is the root IP. However, this proposal leads to additional problems of implementation. For instance, to derive (22b) with clefting in an ECM environment, fronting of the cleft focus *JOHN* must either take place within the bracketed complex DP, an option that is independently unavailable, or *JOHN* has to be extracted from the complex DP:

(22) a. $[_{GP}$ $[_{IP}$ I believe it to have been t t] $[_{FocP}$ JOHN $[_{FamP}$ who was in charge $[_{IP}$ ~~I believe it to have been~~ $[_{sc}$ [~~who was in charge~~] [~~John~~]]]]]]
b. Don't pay attention to $[_{DP}$ those who believe it to have been JOHN who was in charge].

5.2 DOMAINS INCOMPATIBLE WITH MAIN CLAUSE PHENOMENA

5.2.1 Main clause phenomena

An LP analysis of clefts also makes the wrong predictions concerning the distribution of *it*-clefts in finite domains. If *it*-clefts are derived by movements to the LP, then all things being equal, finite domains where such movements are known to be unavailable or degraded should also be incompatible with *it*-clefts. In other words, *it*-clefts should pattern with so-called Main Clause Phenomena (Hooper and Thompson 1973) or Root transformations (Emonds 1970, 1976). Typically the finite domains listed in the following text are known to be incompatible with MCP.[9] We illustrate the patterns for argument-fronting in (23):

(i) central adverbial clauses (23a);
(ii) complements of factive predicates (23b);
(iii) sentential subjects (23c);

[9] There is considerable speaker variation. See also Breul (2004).

(iv) complement clauses to nouns (23d);
(v) subjunctive clauses (23e).

(23) a. *When this song I heard, I remembered my first love.
b. *Mary realizes [that this book, John read]. (Hegarty 1991: 52, n. 19, his (iii))
c. *That this book, Mary read thoroughly is true. (Authier 1992: 332, his (17b))
d. *John raised the possibility that Mary, your antics would upset. (Alrenga 2005: 179, his (15c))
e. *It's important that the book he study carefully. (Hooper and Thompson 1973: 485, (166))

Emonds (1976) already assumed that clefting is structure preserving, that is it is located within his "S," the current TP or IP (Emonds 1976: 138–40). The same point is made by Hooper and Thompson (1973: 472). For Emonds and for Hooper and Thompson, clefting is not an MCP. While there may be restrictions on the distribution of clefting, domains that are incompatible with MCP are compatible with clefting. Adverbial clauses are a case in point: they are compatible with *in situ* contrastive focus; they are incompatible with focus fronting:

(24) a. Whenever we needed MONEY, George could not be reached.
b. *Whenever MONEY we needed, George could not be reached.

Given the appropriate context, adverbial clauses remain compatible with *it*-clefts:

(25) a. Whenever it was MONEY we needed, George was nowhere to be seen.
b. If it was a RIGHT wing government that I wanted I would not have voted for the lib dems.

Speakers who allow focus fronting in *it*-clefts (14), disallow the pattern in adverbial clauses. This shows that while the *it*-cleft patterns differently from focus fronting, the fronting of the cleft focus is focus fronting:

(26) %*I was very worried when JOHN it was that they had invited.

The embedded *that* clauses that are incompatible with MCP also remain compatible with *it*-clefts:

(27) a. John regrets that it was MARY who was put in charge of the conference.
b. That in the end it was BILL who invited Mary surprised everyone.
c. The news that it was MARY that they had invited surprised everyone.

d. But if this is the force of the quantifier in (7), then that force requires that it be ORTCUTT who is the value of the variable *x*.
(<http://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/453/QuineDisplay.pdf>)

5.3 CONCLUSION

If *it*-clefts are derived by focus movement of a constituent to the matrix LP this movement must be distinct from regular focus movement because it is not distributionally restricted. One might argue that the movement involved differs substantively from focus movement, both in terms of landing sites (as already suggested in section 3) and in terms of locality effects (as in 4), but this line of reasoning undermines the original basis of the matrix analysis as well as its attraction, namely the interpretive and derivational parallelism between *it*-clefts and focus fronting. One would also have to postulate a specific LP position for clefting, which seems at this stage to be *sui generis*.

An obvious alternative to this view is to conclude that, since they pattern with sentences that do not involve Main Clause Phenomena, i.e. movement to a matrix LP, the derivation of *it*-clefts does not involve movement to the matrix LP either. This proposal is in line with Emonds's original assumption (1970, 1976) and it corresponds to the middlefield analysis outlined in section 2.1.

6 The embedded analysis

6.1 SUMMARY OF ISSUES RAISED

Our discussion shows that the matrix analysis of clefting first developed in Meinunger (1997, 1998) and elaborated in Frascarelli and Ramaglia (2009, 2013) raises the following problems.

1. The analysis necessitates postulating a novel LP FocP.
2. The incompatibility of movement of the cleft focus with sentential negation is not captured in matrix analyses of clefting.
3. The matrix analysis of clefting leads to the wrong prediction about the distribution of clefting.

All the problems raised follow from the assumption that *it*-clefts are derived by movement to the matrix LP. In order to solve them one has to postulate a specialized lower LP position for the cleft focus and that movement to that position is distinct from other LP A'-movement. This move undermines the economy argument advanced in favor of the analysis.

6.2 THE EMBEDDED ANALYSIS

In Jayaseelan's (2001) and Belletti's (2004, 2005, 2009) cartographic accounts of clefting, crucially, the relevant LP is that of the cleft relative. The core ingredients of Belletti's account are summarized in section 2.1 and in representation 6. For more details we refer to her papers.

Observe that the cleft focus is in a SpecFocP, thus capturing the interpretive similarities with focus fronting, but because this is contained within the domain of the cleft relative, there is no interaction with LP operations at the level of the matrix TP such as subject auxiliary inversion and sentential negation. Moreover, subsequent focus movement of the focus of the cleft is possible. We refer to Rizzi (2010) for an account compatible with criterial freezing. The extraposed position of the cleft relative is as such not incompatible with containing a focus.

7 Conclusion

In this paper we compare two cartographic analyses of English *it*-clefts: Belletti's embedded analysis is a cartographic reinterpretation of existing analyses. It assimilates the syntax of clefts to that of relative clauses. The matrix analysis, first proposed by Meinunger (1997, 1998) and fully explored in Frascarelli and Ramaglia (2013), assimilates the syntax of *it*-clefts with that of focus movement and question formation. We have shown that the matrix analysis, though attractive, faces a number of problems of implementation that are not faced by the embedded approach.

References

Akmajian, A. 1970. "On Deriving Cleft Sentences from Pseudo-cleft Sentences." *Linguistic Inquiry* 1: 149–68.

Alrenga, P. 2005. "A Sentential Subject Asymmetry in English and Its Implications for Complement Selection." *Syntax* 8(3): 175–207.

Authier, J. M. 1992. "Iterated CPs and Embedded Topicalisation." *Linguistic Inquiry* 23: 329–36.

Authier, J. M., and L. Reed. 2005. "The Diverse Nature of Non-Interrogative wh." *Linguistic Inquiry* 36(4): 635–47.

Belletti, A. 2004. "Aspects of the Low IP Area." In L. Rizzi, ed., *The Structure of CP and IP: The Cartography of Syntactic Structures* 2, 16–51. New York: Oxford University Press.

———. 2005. "Answering with a Cleft. The Role of the Null Subject Parameter and the VP Periphery." In *Proceedings of the XXX Incontro di Grammatica Generativa*. Venezia: Cafoscarina.

———. 2009. *Structures and Strategies*. New York: Routledge.

———. 2011. "Focus and the Predicate of Clefts." Paper presented at GIST3: Cartographic Structures and Beyond. Workshop at Ghent University.

Benincà, P., and C. Poletto. 2004. "Topic, Focus and V2: Defining the CP Sublayers." In. Rizzi, ed. *The Structure of CP and IP*, 52–75. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bianchi, V., and M. Frascarelli. 2010. "Is Topic a Root Phenomenon?" *Iberia* 2(1). <http://www.siff.us.es/iberia/index.php/ij/article/viewArticle/23> (accessed February 2, 2013).

Breul, C. 2004. *Focus Structure in Generative Grammar*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Declerck, R. 1988. *Studies on Copular Sentences, Clefts and Pseudo Clefts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

den Dikken, M. 2006. *Relators and Linkers: The Syntax of Predication, Predicate Inversion and Copulas*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Dryer, M. 1996. "Focus, Pragmatic Presupposition and Activated Propositions." *Journal of Pragmatics* 26: 475–523.

Emonds, J. 1970. "Root and Structure-Preserving Transformations." PhD diss. MIT, Cambridge, MA.

———. 1976. *A Transformational Approach to English Syntax*. New York: Academic Press.

Frascarelli, M., and R. Hinterhölzl. 2007. "Types of Topics in German and Italian." In S. Winkler and K. Schwabe, eds. *On Information Structure, Meaning and Form*, 87–116. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Frascarelli, M., and F. Ramaglia. 2009. "(Pseudo)cleft Constructions at the Interfaces." Lingbuzz. <http://ling.auf.net/lingBuzz/000841> (August 1, 2012).

———. 2013. "(Pseudo) Clefts at the Syntax-Prosody-Discourse Interface." In K. Hartmann and T. Veenstra, eds., *The Structure of clefts*, 97–140. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Haegeman, L. 1984. "Interjections and Phrase Structure." *Linguistics* 22: 41–9.

———. 2000a. "Negative Preposing, the Neg Criterion and the Structure of CP." In L. Horn and Y. Kato, eds. *Negation and Polarity*, 29–69. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2000b. "Inversion, Non-adjacent Inversion and Adjuncts in CP." In P. Rowlett, ed. *Transactions of the Philological Society, Special Issue: Papers from the Salford Negation Conference* 98, 121–60. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

———. 2012. *Adverbial Clauses, Main Clause Phenomena and the Composition of the Left Periphery*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Haegeman, L., and B Ürögdi. 2010. "Referential CPs and DPs: An Operator Movement Account." *Theoretical Linguistics* 36: 111–52.

Halliday, M. 1967. "Notes on Transitivity and Theme in English, Part II," *Journal of Linguistics* 3: 199–244.

Hegarty, M. 1992. "Familiar Complements and Their Complementizers: On Some Determinants of A'-locality." Unpublished manuscript, University of Pennsylvania.

Hooper, J., and S. Thompson. 1973. "On the Applicability of Root Transformations." *Linguistic Inquiry*: 465–79.

Huddleston, R., and G. Pullum. 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jayaseelan, K. A. 2001. "IP-internal Topic and Focus Phrases." *Studia Linguistica* 55(1): 39–75.

Laka, I. 1990. "Negation in Syntax: On the Nature of Functional Categories and Projections." PhD diss. MIT, Cambridge, MA.

Meinunger, A. 1997. "The Structure of Cleft and Pseudo-Cleft Sentences." In M. Moosally and R. Blight, eds., *Texas Linguistic Forum 38, The Syntax and Semantics of Predication*, 235–46. Austin: University of Texas Department of Linguistics.

———. 1998. "A Monoclausal Structure for (Pseudo-) Cleft Sentences." In P. N. Tamanji and K. Kusumoto, eds. *Proceedings of NELS (North East Linguistic Society)* 28, 283–98. Amherst, MA: Graduate Linguistic Student Association.

Molnár, V., and S. Winkler. 2010. "Edges and Gaps: Contrast at the Interfaces." *Lingua* 120: 1392–1415.

Poletto, C., and J.-Y. Pollock. 2004. "On the Left Periphery of Some Romance *wh*-Questions." In L. Rizzi, ed. *The Structure of IP and CP*, 251–96. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Progovac, L. 1994. *Negative and Positive Polarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Quirk, R., S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, and J. Svartvik. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.

Radford, A. 2009a. *Analysing English Sentences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2009b. *An Introduction to English Sentence Structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Reeve M. 2011. "The Syntactic Structure of English Clefts." *Lingua* 121: 142–71.

Rizzi, L. 1993. "Argument–adjunct (a)symmetries." *Proceedings of NELS* (*North East Linguistic Society*) 22: 365–81. Amherst, MA: Graduate Linguistic Student Association. [A revised version in G. Cinque, J. Koster, and J.-Y. Pollock, eds., *Paths towards Universal Grammar*, 361–76. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1994.]

———. 1997. "The Fine Structure of the Left Periphery." In Liliane H., ed. *Elements of Grammar*, 289–330. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer.

———. 2001. "On the Position Int(errogative) in the Left Periphery of the Clause." In G. Cinque and G. Salvi, eds. *Current Studies in Italian Syntax: Essays Offered to Lorenzo Renzi*, 286–96. Amsterdam: North-Holland.

———. 2004. Locality and Left Periphery. In A. Belletti, ed., *Structures and Beyond*, 223–51. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2010. "The Cartography of Syntactic Structures: Criteria, Freezing and Interface Effects." Presented at Ecole d'Automne de Linguistique, Paris: École Normale Supérieure (ENS), September 16.

———. 2012. "Cartography, Criteria and Labeling." Blaise Pascal Lectures, Paris. September 11–13.

Ross, J. R. 1984. "Inner Islands." *Berkeley Linguistics Society* 10: 258–65.

Sleeman, P. 2011. "Quantifier-focalization in French and Italian." Handout paper presented at department of linguistics, KU Leuven. March 21.

Starke, M. 2001. "Move Dissolves into Merge: A Theory of Locality." PhD diss. University of Geneva, <http://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/000002 >.