Author: Cristina Sánchez Lander

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Amalgam clefts in spoken English

Supervisor: Miren Alazne Landa

Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana y de Traducción e Interpretación

Área de Filología Inglesa

Abstract

When speakers mark the focus of a sentence they do so because they need to highlight that this constituent conveys the new information of an utterance. That is, they want to bring the interlocutor's attention to that particular piece of information. In English the focus can be marked in different ways. On the one hand, constituents can receive focal stress to mark their informative importance. On the other hand, different information packaging constructions can be used to place constituents in focus. In the spoken language of some varieties of English it is common to use amalgam clefts to mark the focus of a sentence.

The main characteristic of amalgam clefts is that one of the two finite clauses that form the amalgam is an independent-like clause which appears in a context that apparently should not admit an independent clause. The two finite clauses share some constituents. This is illustrated in (1) below:

(1) What I want to do here is I want to summarize my paper.

Notice that in (1) the sequence *I want to* appears in both clauses. As both clauses contain amalgamated linguistic material, this construction is called "amalgam cleft".

There are four types of amalgam clefts: amalgam pseudocleft, reverse amalgam pseudocleft, *that's x is y* type amalgam cleft and question-answer amalgam.

Amalgam clefts are apparently similar to standard pseudoclefts; the only difference between them is thought to be that the Focus Phrase (FP) of amalgam clefts is, contrary to standard pseudoclefts, an independent-like clause that appears in a dependent-clause position. However, following O'Neill (2012, 2015) I show that despite their apparent similarities, amalgam clefts are not pseudoclefts since the former allow multiple *wh*-expressions and sluicing and pseudoclefts do not and whereas pseudoclefts can appear in Exceptional Case Marking (ECM) and raising contexts amalgams cannot. Additionally, I present evidence that the *to be* form that appears in amalgam clefts is not a real copula and I follow O'Neill (2012) in claiming that amalgams are some sort of coordinated structures. That is, the copula of amalgam clefts has lost its copulative function.

The use of amalgam clefts is determined by contextual factors: speakers are more likely to opt to produce amalgam clefts when the predicate of the *wh*-clause is *do*, when only one syllable is repeated between the *wh*-clause and the FP, and when there are multiple FP clauses.

Key words: information packaging constructions, amalgam clefts, *wh*-clefts, independent-like clause.

Acknowledgments

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of amalgam clefts, a construction that is illustrated in (1) below:

(1) a. What you need right now is **you need some rest**.
    b. **You need some rest** is what you need right now.

Amalgam clefts are formed by a *wh*-clause, some form of *to be* and a constituent that looks like an independent clause but that appears in a predicative complement position (1a) or in the subject position (1b).

This construction which has received different names in the literature (e.g. "double cleft construction" and "un-integrated demonstrative cleft" in Calude (2008), divides a sentence into two parts in terms of information: (i) a presupposition that is expressed by the *wh*-clause and (ii) some new information that is contained in the independent-like clause.

Amalgam clefts, which are mostly used in spoken English, are challenging because an apparently independent clause is used in the syntactic place of a dependent clause. Throughout this paper I present the main aspects of one of the syntactic analysis that has been proposed to explain the syntactic problem that arises with amalgam cleft constructions.

According to O'Neill (2015:9), the reason behind the name of this special cleft is that the *wh*-clause and the independent clause contain amalgamated (i.e. overlapping) sentence strings. In other words, both parts of the construction share some linguistic material, as shown in (2) and (3) below:

(2)   **I'm going to** read a newspaper is what **I'm going to** do.
(3) **He cooked** a cake is what **he cooked**.

Examples (2) and (3) show that the subject and part of the predicate of the independent-like clause and the subject and part of the predicate of the *wh*-clause are identical. That is, in (2) *I'm going to* is repeated in both clauses and in example (3) it is the sequence

He cooked that is repeated in both parts of the sentence. This repetition of information is what constitutes the amalgam between both clauses.

Instances of amalgam clefts can be found in English as early as the mid-17th century (Yale University, 2017), although they are not very frequent in old documents probably due to the fact that they are principally used in spoken English. Mair (2013) presents two hypotheses on the origin of amalgam cleft constructions: a) the amalgam cleft construction is the reduction of a variant with a subordinate clause which includes the conjunction *that*, or b) it is a sui generis construction. In order to find out which the origin of the construction is, Mair (2013) looks at data from different time periods and finds that decades before the amalgam construction without the conjunction *that* was used, the variant with the conjunction *that* was used. Thus, the reduction analysis is possible. However, the variant with *that* was not more common than the reduced variant, which would be expected if the original version was the one with the conjunction. For that reason, amalgam cleft constructions are not considered reduced versions of constructions with *that*, but independent constructions.

I would like to stress the fact that amalgam clefts are not ungrammatical constructions. That they are less common in written English only means that they are more typical of spoken discourse. Although they are not part of the university curriculum (at least we have not seen this structure in our studies here), I have heard them in conferences, talks, lectures, tv shows and interviews with educated speakers of different English varieties. The amalgam construction is used in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. English speakers from these countries judge amalgam cleft constructions as natural and provide positive judgments on their acceptability (Yale University, 2017).

The goal of this paper is to provide a broad description of the construction under study. In order to do so I will try to provide an answer to the following research questions:

(i)   What are the principal types of amalgams?
(ii)   What is the main difference between a regular *wh*-cleft and the amalgam cleft?
(iii)   Why are amalgam clefts considered information packaging constructions? Which is the discourse function of amalgam clefts?

(iv) What syntactic analysis can be provided that solves the problem of this construction?

(v) Are there similar structures in English? If so, in what sense are they similar?

(vi) Are there similar structures in other languages? If so, in what sense are they similar?

In order to provide an adequate answer to these questions, I have organized this paper in five sections (in addition to the present introduction): in section 2, I offer an overview of information packaging constructions in English and I try to establish how clefts fit into this set of structures. In section 3, I present the main analysis of amalgam clefts that has been provided in the literature with a special emphasis on the components of these constructions from both a morphosyntactic and a pragmatic perspective. In section 4, I briefly present some English constructions that are somewhat related to amalgam clefts and, in section 5, I try to do the same with respect to other languages. In section 6, I offer a summary of my answers to the research questions listed above.

2. Information packaging in English and Clefts

Before discussing amalgam clefts, it is important to understand what information packaging[1] is and how it gets manifested in English. It is commonly known that in English the unmarked or the canonical constituent order is Subject-Verb-Object and that the focus and the weight normally appear at the end of the sentence (Lambrecht, 1994:15-16). However, on some occasions we want to move some constituents around the sentence in order to mark their informative importance in the communicative context. That is, as claimed by Vallduví and Engdahl (1996:2), we restructure sentences in order to fulfil the communication demands of a particular context or discourse, as can be observed in sentences (4) and (5):[2]

(4) a. Two kids were playing in the park.

b. There were two kids playing in the park.

(5) a. We signed three of the documents.

b. Three of the documents were signed.

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[1] Information packaging and information structure (IS) are going to be used interchangeably in this paper.
[2] When not indicated otherwise, the examples are my own.

In the examples above, the (a) versions represent the canonical SVO word order typical of English, whereas in the corresponding (b) versions some elements have been moved by means of non-canonical constructions (in (4) existential *there* has been inserted, and in (5) the sentence has been passivized) in order to place them in sentence positions where they can receive different degrees of prominence. For instance, in (4b) an element that is totally new (informatively speaking, *two kids*) is moved from the subject position to a position more towards the end of the sentence (a more focal position in English). The use of the passive in (5b) manages to eliminate an element –the doer of the action– which is not informatively relevant in this conversational context and moves to the subject position information that is partially known to the listener (they must know that some documents were signed even if not how many).

As regards focal information in English, (see Vallduví and Engdahl (1996), among many others) we find that focus is associated with nuclear stress. Commonly focal phrases appear in canonical positions without suffering any syntactic operation. That is, the position of the nuclear stress will be modified in order to place a constituent in focus, as can be observed in (6) below, where [ ] represents the information that receives focal stress:

(6) a. The house is [$_F$ **old**].

b. The house [$_F$ **is old**].

c. [$_F$ **The house is old**].

d. [$_F$ **The house**] is old.

e. The house [$_F$ **is**] old.

The examples in (6) show that the informative part of the sentence, that is, what is not expected and is newsy, is marked as focal by the nuclear stress. In order to demonstrate why a constituent is stressed and not the other, we need to set up some context for each of the sentences in (6). This is done in (7) below:

(7) a. The house is not new.

The house is [$_F$ **old**].

b. What is the problem with the house that you have bought?

The house [$_F$ **is old**].

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c. Why is your sister sad after moving in with her boyfriend?

[F **The house is old**].

d. The garden is old.

No. [F **The house**] is old.

e. I do not know if the house is old.

The house [F **is**] old.

We can observe that the focus falls on the predicate in complement position in (7a); in (7b), on the entire VP; in (7c), on the entire sentence, as the whole sentence is informative and new material; in (7d), on the subject of the copular sentence and, in (7e), on the verb.

However, among many others, Krifka (2006:7) states that focus can be marked in different ways such as using different information packaging constructions. The most frequent information packaging constructions in English are preposing, postposing, inversion, existential *there* constructions, extraposition, left dislocation, right dislocation, passives and clefts (Ward et al., 2002:1366). Since clefts are the topic of the present paper they will be the focus of the remainder of this section.

Clefts are constructions that are used to place sentence elements in focus. There are different types of cleft constructions in English, but the two main types are illustrated in (8) and (9) below:

(8) It was a chocolate cake that I ate.
(9) What I ate was a chocolate cake.

The structure shown in (8) is the so-called *it*-cleft, as it is a complex sentence whose subject is *it* followed by a predicate where the verb is an inflected form of *to be* which is followed by the focalized element and a clause introduced by *that*. In this sentence *a chocolate cake* has been focalized. The construction in (9) is referred to as pseudo-cleft or *wh*-cleft because the subject is a *wh*-clause; the predicate of pseudo-clefts is formed by the verb *to be* and the focalized phrase. In (9) the focus position is occupied by *a chocolate cake*. According to Ward et al. (2002:1415), the reference of *I ate* is the backgrounded information or the information that is presupposed. That is, in examples (8) and (9) both the speaker and the listener presuppose that the speaker ate something. On the other hand, *a chocolate cake* is the foregrounded information as it conveys the

information that is new or not known prior to the utterance of the sentence in question. As Lambrecht (2001:474) states, the foregrounded information is the part of the proposition that is not predictable. That is, in (8) and (9) the speaker is asserting that the thing that he ate was *a chocolate cake*.

The sentences in (8) and (9) are referentially similar to the canonical construction used in (10):

(10) I ate a chocolate cake.

In other words, (8)-(10) refer to the same event in the real world. However, from an informational point of view these three sentences are not identical and, thus, will not be used in the same discourse context. In this respect, let us consider a different situation in (11) and (12) below:

(11) a. Why did Peter go to the pool first thing in the morning?
     b. It is Mark that went to the pool (not Peter).
(12) a. What did Mark do first thing in the morning?
     b. #It is Mark that went to the pool.

Both (11b) and (12b) are grammatical. However, only (11b) is felicitous. In (11b) we want to emphasize that it was Mark that went to the pool instead of Peter (as believed by the person asking (11a)). These types of constructions provide contrastive focus. In this sense, it can be observed that (11b) is giving information contrary to what is presupposed by (11a). In other words, (11a) presupposes that Peter went to the pool first thing in the morning and (11b) is making a contrast with that information. For that reason, we are using an information packaging construction, in this case, the *it*-cleft construction, to move *Mark* around the sentence and place it in focus. *Mark*, a nominal phrase, refers to the new and emphasized information, and it is placed in the focal position of an *it*-cleft: between the inflected form of the verb *to be* and the *it*-clause. However, in (12b) *Mark* is not being contrasted with any information in (12a). Moreover, *Mark* in (12b) does not refer to new information as it has already been introduced in sentence (12a). Therefore, there is no reason to place *Mark* in the focal position of the *it*-cleft. The new information in sentence (12b) is what Mark did first thing in the morning, that is, that he went to the pool. As a consequence, if we use an *it*-cleft construction to place this new information in focus, the resulting sentence is (13):

(13) It is go to the pool that Mark did first thing in the morning.

In (13) we see that *go to the pool* is in the focus position of the *it*-cleft and that it is an adequate answer to the question in (12a). Even if (12b) is grammatical it is infelicitous in the context (12) as it is not properly answering the question asked by (12a). Thus, (12b) can be considered irrelevant (or infelicitous in this context).

As mentioned before, there are two main types of clefts: *it*-clefts and *wh*-clefts. It is also important to point out that both of them have their reversed versions, as shown in (14) and (15) below:

(14) a. It was a new book that I bought. (*it*-cleft)
   b. A new book it was that I bought. (Reverse *it*-cleft)
(15) a. What I bought was a new book. (*wh*-cleft)
   b. A new book was what I bought. (Reverse *wh*-cleft)

It has to be highlighted that (14b) is in fact a case of cleft plus fronting. That is, the focal information has been brought to the front of the clause or, in other words, the focus information occupies a topical position. In (15b), however, there is a simple inversion between the focalized element and the *wh*-clause.

Among the *wh*-clefts there are special cases such as the *If because* cleft presented in example (16) and the amalgam cleft shown in example (17):

(16) If he wants to buy a house it's because he is rich.
(17) What he should do is he should buy a house.

These constructions, just like the rest of cleft constructions, are used to place some information (*because he is rich*, *he should buy a house*) in focus.

In the following section we will analyse one of these special cases: amalgam cleft constructions. The components of amalgam cleft constructions are: variable, weight, value and counterweight. These concepts are explained and illustrated below as we will be making use of them in later sections of the present paper. Let us begin with their definitions (O'Neill, 2012:6):

-Variable: the constituent that is not referential and, thus, it needs to receive content or be further specified by a phrase in the other side of the copula.

-Weight: the phrase that contains the variable.

-Value: the referential phrase that specifies or identifies the non-referential constituent in the other side of the copula.

-Counterweight: the phrase that contains the value of the variable

As regards the illustration of these concepts, consider example (18) below:

(18) [What she should do ₍variable₎]₍weight₎ is [she should [study more] ₍value₎] ₍counterweight₎.

In (18) *what she should do* is the weight, which contains the variable in need of further specification. The sequence *she should study more* is the counterweight, which contains the value of the variable, in this case, *study more*, which specifies the non-referential constituent in the weight.

In what follows, we proceed to analyse the amalgam cleft construction in more detail.

3. Amalgam clefts

There are four types of amalgam clefts in English: amalgam pseudocleft (19), reverse amalgam pseudocleft (20), *that's x is y* type amalgam cleft (21) and question-answer amalgam (22):

(19) What I am going to do is I am going to tidy my room.

(20) He can play tennis is what he can do.

(21) That's what he should do is read a book.

(22) You know what John did, is he broke a window with the ball.

Typically clefts are used to specify the value of a variable (Patten, 2012). In (19) and (20) the weight is the *wh*-clause, which is linked by a finite copula to the counterweight, the proposition that contains the value of the variable (*tidy my room* and *play tennis*). In (21) *that's x* contains the variable *what he should do* and *y* gives its value, that is, *read a book*. In (22) the indirect question is the weight, which is followed by the counterweight. Therefore, we can conclude that the main features shared by all types of amalgam clefts is that they are composed by two finite clauses, that is, both the weight and the counterweight are finite clauses (O'Neill, 2013:1).

We can assume that the subject and the verb of both the *wh*-clause and the independent clause are identical, as observed in example (23). However, this is not always the case. On some occasions they are partly identical, as illustrated in (24), (25) and (26):

(23) What **she** should do is **she** should study more.

(24) What **it had done** is **it destroyed** all the old houses.

(25) What **my father** can do is **he** can play football.

(26) What **we** can do is **my husband** can find you another place to stay.

Example (23) shows identical subject and verb form in the counterweight and the *wh*-clause. However, we can see mismatches in examples (24), (25) and (26) that have been explained by Koops and Ross-Hagebaum (2008:463). In (24) there is a tense mismatch between the past perfect and the simple past, and we can observe subject mismatches in examples (25) and (26). That is, subjects are not identical due to two reasons: firstly, as a consequence of pronominalization as in (25) and, secondly, as a result of the use of split subjects, as in (26). In the later example, the subject of what Lambrecht's (2001) refers to as Focus Phrase (henceforth FP) is included in the subject of the *wh*-clause, although they are not coextensive, that is, they do not denote the same referent.

Amalgam pseudoclefts are called pseudoclefts because they are apparently similar to standard pseudoclefts. According to Koops and Ross-Hagebaum (2008:462), the main difference between the standard *wh*-cleft and the amalgam *wh*-cleft is in the FP. The FP of a *wh*-cleft has the appropriate form for a syntactic argument, that is, a constituent of the sentence such as a NP, VP, AP, finite CP, non-finite clause, adverbial P and purpose CP. The FP of an amalgam cleft, however, is not the appropriate one syntactically speaking as it is an independent-like clause that appears in a position typically occupied by a dependent clause introduced by an overt complementizer.

Amalgam clefts are principally used in spoken English (they are also attested in written transcription of what has been said orally). The amalgam cleft construction is used to establish a connection with the interlocutor during the communicative act. When speakers are engaged in a conversation, amalgam clefts are used to draw the interlocutor's attention to what the speaker is saying, specifically to the focus of the utterance. That is, the speaker marks the focus of the sentence by using an amalgam cleft in order to make clear to the interlocutor that the focus is the new information the

interlocutor should pay more attention to. Therefore, although amalgam clefts are grammatical in written form, they are more likely to occur in the spoken language.

According to Calude (2008:100-104), cleft constructions are used to organize the discourse, that is, they make it clear how parts of the discourse relate to each other. Thus, the function of the cleft constructions in the management of the discourse are: explaining the reason of an earlier statement, relating two utterances, relating two prior utterances, providing opinions, evaluations and assessments, taking the floor in a conversation, and highlighting the value which the cleft points to.[3] The pragmatic functions of *that's x is y* appear to be the same as the ones Calude (2008:100-104) assigns to clefts (listed above). Consider (27) below:

(27) A: You know, I- I- I have real strong beliefs in capital punishment, but when it comes right down to it, ... yeah.
    B: They're not gonna do it.
    A: Uh yeah, I- I'm wondering though –
    B: That's my biggest problem is, ... even if you give them the death penalty, ... they appeal it, and appeal it, and appeal it.

(Ross-Hagebaum, 2004:413, example (34))

In example (27) speaker B uses *that's x is y* to summarize the theme of the discourse and to provide her opinion on it.

Additionally, *that's x is y* constructions are used to specify the referent of the demonstrative. According to O'Neill (2012:33) speakers commonly use the *that's x is y* type of amalgam cleft when they want to specify the referent of the demonstrative *that* and there are more than one possible antecedent in the discourse. Consider example (28) below:

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[3] For reasons of space, we cannot illustrate all of these functions here. The reader is referred to Calude (2008) for a very interesting discussion of these discourse functions.

(28) A: Realistically, if Dave and I get married any time like this decade, we're going to have to use someone's yard. Sorry, friend who paid lots of money for nice venues.

B: Yeah, but that is also hard, (the ignoring other people, I meant).

A: I'd like a fancy place too, but oh well. **That's the only money thing that worries me very much is location.**

(O'Neill, 2012:34, example (78))

In (28) *that* can have different antecedents: *a fancy place*, *ignoring other people* and *paying lots of money for nice venues*. The *That's x is y* type of amalgam cleft has been used to specify that *that* refers to *paying lots of money for nice venues*.

In the interpretation of cleft constructions, we need to bear in mind Lambrecht's (2001) definitions of the types of presupposition and see how they work in an example of amalgam clefts. Lambrecht (2001) defines three types of presupposition:

"Pragmatic presupposition: the set of propositions lexico-grammatically evoked in a sentence that the speaker assumes the hearer already knows (K-presupposed) or believes or is ready to take for granted at the time the sentence is uttered (the "old information")" (Lambrecht, 2001:474)

"An entity or proposition is consciousness-presupposed (C-presupposed) if the speaker assumes that its mental representation has been activated in the interlocutors' short-term memory at the time of the utterance." (Lambrecht, 2001:475)

"An entity or proposition is topicality-presupposed (T-presupposed) if at utterance time the speaker assumes that the hearer considers it a center of current interest and hence a potential locus of predication. A topical denotatum is by definition a relatively predictable element in a proposition."(Lambrecht, 2001:476)

In what follows, I apply the definitions above to a *That's X is Y* type of amalgam. Consider example (29) below:

(29) That's what I wanted to do is pass my exam.

In uttering (29), the speaker K-Presupposes (assumes as knowledge of the hearer) the open proposition associated with X, *speaker wanted to do x*, and T-presupposes that the

open proposition is of current interest. The pseudocleft, *what I wanted to do is pass my exam*, conveys the assertion that the focus Y, *pass my exam*, should be substituted for by the variable in the open proposition, as explained in O'Neill (2012:36-37).

3.1. The components of amalgam clefts and the syntactic characterization

In this section I provide information about the form of the value, counterweight and the weight following O'Neill (2015). Besides, I also introduce the syntactic characterization of amalgam clefts, that is, I describe one theory that has been used to explain the amalgam cleft construction.

3.1.1. The form of the value

The value of an amalgam cleft can take the form of any syntactic category (O'Neill, 2015:12-13), as shown in examples (30) to (35) below:

(30) What they like is they like $_{DP}$ **chocolate**.
(31) What Mary is is she's $_{AP}$ **beautiful**.
(32) Where she left the book is she left the book $_{PP}$ **on the table**.
(33) What I will do is I will $_{VP}$ **study hard**.
(34) How John drives is John drives $_{AdvP}$ **quickly**.
(35) Why he's shouting is $_{CP}$ **she is angry**.

The value in (30) is a DP, an AP in (31), a PP in (32), a VP in (33), and an AdvP in (34). The values in *wh*-clefts can take these syntactic forms too. Example (35) shows that the whole counterweight is the value when the variable is propositional, which is particular to amalgam clefts. VP values are more used in amalgam clefts than in *wh*-clefts as can be observed in example (36):[4]

(36) a.   I should have read the book is what I should have done.
     b. %Read the book is what I should have done.

Although (36b) is grammatical, (36a) is more productive than example (36b) as using a VP as the logical subject in an amalgam cleft is preferred (O'Neill, 2015: 13). It is very common to introduce VP-value amalgam clefts with *What x does/did/should do/will do is…* (O'Neill, 2015:14).

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[4] % represents that the sentence is less productive (i.e. less frequently used).

As the value of an amalgam cleft can take more syntactic categories than the value of *wh*-clefts, we can conclude that it is categorically speaking more flexible.

In terms of grammatical functions, the value of an amalgam cleft can appear in any syntactic position, as shown in (37) to (40) below:

(37)   What she should eat is she should eat **vegetables**.
(38)   It's **intelligent** is what she is.
(39)   Why I went home is **because I was tired**.
(40) ?What killed John is **smoking** killed him.

The value in example (37) is a direct object, a predicative complement in (38), adverbial adjunct in (39) and a subject in (40). The subject role is not commonly used in amalgam pseudocleft.

3.1.2. The form of the counterweight

As I have mentioned before, both the weight and the counterweight are finite clauses (O'Neill, 2013). Therefore, the counterweight shows root properties. These properties have been explained by O'Neill (2015:15-17) and I adopt her analysis in what follows. Firstly, the counterweight cannot be introduced by the complementizer *that*, as can be seen in (41) below:

(41) *That she went to Canada is what she did.

Example (41) shows that the counterweight constituent is an independent clause and not an embedded clause as it cannot be introduced by the complementizer *that*.

Secondly, interrogative counterweights have root word order instead of the embedded word order, as it is illustrated in example (42) below:

(42) Why did she go to London is what is at issue.

Example (42) shows that in the interrogative form there is subject-verb inversion in the counterweight, which is a property of root clauses.

Finally, it is possible to find topicalization as in (43) below, and locative inversion as in (44), which are both restricted to root environments:

(43) To Mary, you should buy a book is what you should do.

(44) In the garage was a spider is why we screamed.

In (43) the indirect object of the verb in the counterweight has been fronted. In (44) the locative complement of the verb has been fronted and the subject and the verb have been inversed. All of these are root-clause operations, not embedded clause operations.

All the properties that I have mentioned in this subsection seem to suggest that the counterweight is an independent clause and not an embedded clause. This means that we need to figure out what type of analysis can account for the structure of amalgam clefts that allows for a root clause in what appears to be an embedded clause position. I return to this section in 3.1.4., but before doing that we need to consider the possibility that amalgam clefts may be pseudo-clefts. We tackle this possibility next.

3.1.3. The form of the weight

According to O'Neill (2015:18-19), the weight of amalgam clefts can be introduced by *what*, *where*, *how*, *when*, *why*, *who*, *how much*/*many*, and *which*. The problem arises with *who* and *which*: they can be used in reverse amalgam clefts but not in regular amalgam clefts as shown in (45) and (46) below:

(45) a.   He loves Mary is **who he loves**.

   b. ?**Who he loves** is he loves Mary.

(46) a.   She likes *Romeo and Juliet* is **which book she likes**.

   b. *****Which book she likes** is she likes *Romeo and Juliet*.

Examples (45) and (46) show that amalgam clefts starting with the weight are more restricted than the ones starting with the counterweight (O'Neill, 2015:19), as shown by the acceptability judgments on the examples.

As for whether amalgam clefts can be analysed as *wh*-clefts, the truth of the matter is that the two constructions differ in many respects, as explained by O'Neill (2012:17-18; 2015:17-20). Firstly, it is possible to use multiple *wh*-expressions in amalgam clefts, as illustrated in (47) and (48) below:

(47) **Who ate what** is Jill ate a pizza and jack ate a fries. (O'Neill, 2012:19, example (76a))

(48) We should put the lamp on the desk and the table in the corner is **what we should put where**. (O'Neill, 2012:19, example (76b))

Examples (47) and (48) show the use of different *wh*-expressions in the same amalgam cleft, which is not possible in canonical clefts, as shown in example (49) below:

(49) ***What** we should put **where** will be the lamp on the desk and the table in the corner. (O'Neill, 2012:19, example (77))

Secondly, sluicing is allowed in amalgam clefts.[5] That is, it is possible to elide everything except for the *wh*-phrase when the weight occurs after the copula and the information is repeated, as shown in (50) and (51) below:

(50) You should invite Jack is who ~~you should invite~~. (O'Neill, 2012:19, example (78a))

(51) They went up the hill is where ~~they went~~. (O'Neill, 2012:19, example (78b))

Examples (50) and (51) demonstrate that the weight of an amalgam cleft is different from the weight of a canonical cleft, as sluicing is possible in amalgam but not in canonical clefts as shown in example (52) below:

(52) *Up the hill is where ~~they went~~.

Thirdly, it is not possible to use amalgam clefts in Exceptional Case Marking (ECM) contexts, as can be observed in (53) below. By contrast, pseudoclefts can be used in ECM contexts, as in (54) below:

(53) a. *I consider what Mary is (to be) Mary is intelligent.

b. *I consider Mary is intelligent (to be) what Mary is.

c. *I consider you know what Mary is? (to be) intelligent.

d. *I consider that's the problem, (to be) I do not know how to get good marks.

(54)   I consider intelligent to be what John is.

In (53) we observe that all amalgam types (*wh*-amalgam in (a), reverse *wh*-amalgam in (b), question-answer amalgam in (c) and *That's X is Y* amalgam in (d)) are not grammatical in ECM contexts. However, the grammaticality of (54) shows that amalgam clefts differ from pseudoclefts as pseudoclefts can appear in ECM contexts.

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[5] Typical examples of this type of ellipsis are provided in the coordinated constructions in (i) and (ii) below:

(i) Peter bought something but I don't know what ~~Peter bought~~.

(ii) Molly was upset and who knows why ~~Molly was upset~~.

Fourthly, raising is also ungrammatical in all amalgam clefts, as shown in example (55). However, it is grammatical in pseudoclefts as in (56) below:

(55) a. *What the book is seems to be the book is very interesting.

b. *The book is very interesting, seems to be what the book is.

c. *You know what the book is? Seems to be very interesting.

d. *That's the issue, seems to be we are late.

(56)   Difficult seems to be what this exam is.

We can see in example (55) that all amalgams are ungrammatical in raising contexts (*wh*-amalgam in (a), reverse *wh*-amalgam in (b), question-answer amalgam in (c) and *That's X is Y* amalgam in (d)). However, (56) shows that pseudoclefts are used in raising contexts.

All the differences between pseudoclefts and amalgam clefts mentioned in this section (and adapted from O'Neill 2012, 2015) show that although initially amalgam clefts were thought to be similar to pseudoclefts (I have previously mentioned in section 3 that the main difference between the standard *wh*-cleft and the amalgam *wh*-cleft is thought to be in the FP), there are actually many differences. Thus, we can conclude that amalgam clefts are not pseudoclefts. Then, what are they? I believe the key to this question resides in the behaviour of the copula.

3.1.4. Behaviour of the copula

The main question that we need to tackle is whether the copula in an amalgam cleft is a real copula or not. I am going to follow O'Neill (2012:18-20) to determine whether the verb *to be* that appears in amalgams has the same properties as English copulas. O'Neill (2012:18-29) finds a number of differences. First of all, it must be noted that in an amalgam cleft the copula is almost always bare third-person singular: *is* or *was*. In amalgams it is not grammatical to use auxiliaries in other tenses shown in (57) below:

(57) *He likes football **has** always **been** what he likes.

Example (57) shows that it is not possible to use auxiliaries in amalgam clefts constructions.

In addition, the copula of amalgam clefts can occur neither with modals (58) nor with negation (59):

(58) *What I do not like **should be** I do not like playing basketball.

(59) *Mary is beautiful **isn't** what Mary is.

Example (58) demonstrates that the copula in amalgam clefts cannot appear with modals and (59) shows that it cannot be negated, while real copulas can appear in different tenses and they can also be negated or preceded by a modal.

Regarding the optionality of the copula of amalgam clefts, there is not uniformity between different types of amalgams, as can be seen from (60) to (63) below:

(60) What Jack bought, (is) Jack bought a new house.

(61) You know what Jack bought? (is) Jack bought a new house.

(62) That's what Jack bought, (is) Jack bought a new house.

(63) John bought a new house *(is) what Jack bought.

It is possible to drop the copula in *wh*-amalgams only when there is a prominent comma intonation after the weight clause, as shown in example (60). In question-answer amalgams and *That's X is Y* amalgams it is always possible to use null copula as in examples (61) and (62). However, in reverse *wh*-amalgams it is always compulsory to use overt copula, as the ungrammaticality of (63) shows.

I concur with O'Neill (2015:10-11) that if the verb *to be* in amalgam clefts does not have any of the properties of copulas then it is not a copula. Then, what is it? What is the syntactic function of *is* or *was* in these constructions?

It has been concluded by O' Neill (2012:3) that the copula in amalgam clefts has a coordinating function. The copula –which she refers to as the Relator– coordinates two conjuncts, which in this case are both clausal: the weight clause and the counterweight clause. It is crucial to understand that different coordinators have different functions: *and* and *or* have the semantics of intersection, union and disjunction; *for* has a clausal or explicative meaning and O'Neill (2012:41) proposes that "there exists a coordinator with the semantics of identity that is spelled out by the copula *is*". That is, the relator in amalgam clefts semantically identifies the elements

that it syntactically coordinates. And, more importantly, this analysis is compatible with the characterization of the counterweights as a root clause that I contended in 3.1.2.

Now, do amalgam clefts have any of the typical properties of coordinated structures? O'Neill (2012:42-43) provides evidence that that is the case. Firstly, amalgam clefts follow the requirement of the Law of Coordination of Likes as the two conjuncts are of the same category; specifically, amalgams coordinate two clauses, the weight clause and the counterweight clause. Secondly, sluicing, as mentioned before, is possible like in other cases of coordination (see example in footnote 5).

Thus, the evidence at our disposal is compatible with the claim that amalgam clefts can be syntactically analysed as coordinated structures. In the next section, we move on to the question on how these constructions are used in discourse, or rather, how contextual factors determine whether they are used or not.

3.2. The discourse function of amalgam clefts

The information structure of amalgam clefts is also important to determine their use. Koops and Ross-Hagebaum (2008:463) have collected data from different corpora and they propose that "the formal properties of amalgam clefts can be insightfully related to their information structure and discourse function". That is, we can select between the canonical *wh*-cleft and the amalgam *wh*-cleft taking into account the information structure and discourse function of each one. I mention three cases when the use of one of the two types of *wh*-clefts (canonical *wh*-cleft or amalgam *wh*-cleft) is preferred over the other following Koops and Ross-Hagebaum (2008:463-467). First, when the predicate of the *wh*-clause is *do*, it is more common to use the amalgam cleft than the *wh*-cleft. This can be seen in Table 1 (from Koops and Ross-Hagebaum, 2008:464).

Projected phrasal category	Standard *wh*-cleft	Amalgam *wh*-cleft
VP (i.e., *do* in *wh*-clause)	47% (120)	53% (136)
NP	80% (86)	20% (22)
Other (PP, AP, *that*-clause)	98% (249)	2% (5)

Table 1: Proportion of *wh*-cleft variants by phrasal category of projected FP

Table 1 shows that speakers are more likely to accept amalgam clefts when the *wh*-clause predicate is the verb *do* like in example (64). By contrast, when the *wh*-predicate are verbs projecting an NP object complement (see example (65) below) or other types

of complements like PP, AP or a *that*-clause, the standard *wh*-cleft is more commonly used.

(64) a.   What they will do is they will watch TV.

     b. %What they will do is watch TV.

(65) a.   What they want is pizza.

     b. %What they want is they want pizza.

Second, when choosing between a *wh*-cleft and an amalgam cleft, speakers also take into account the amount of additional syllables required to construct the main clause FP. This correlation works inversely, that is, when more additional syllables are required, the speakers are less likely to choose the amalgam construction, as shown in Figure 1 (adapted from Koops and Ross-Hagebaum, 2008:466):
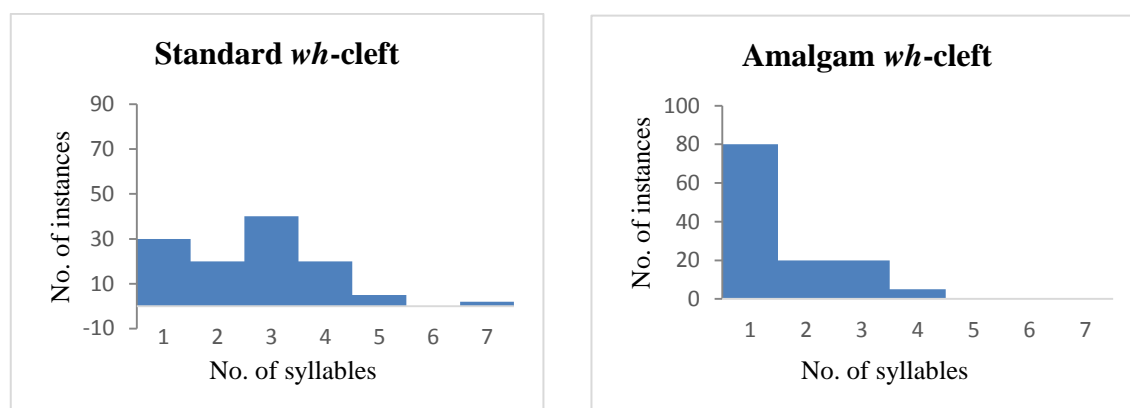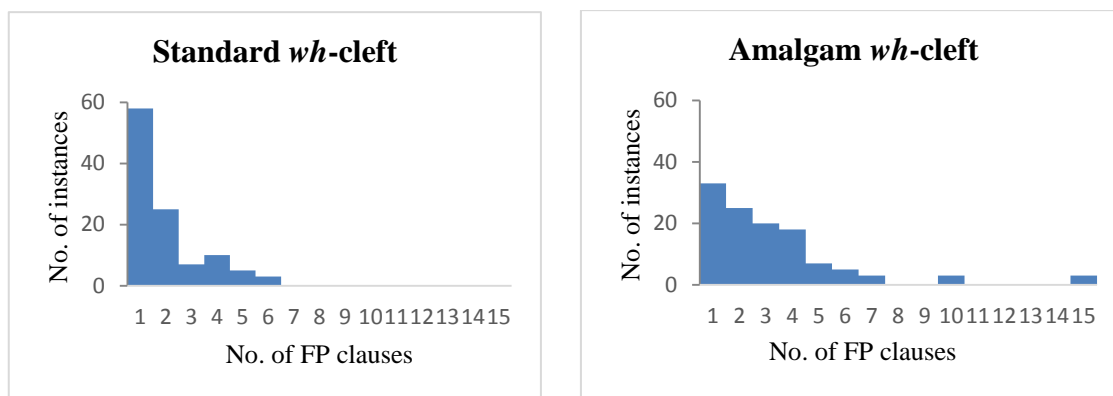

Figure 1: Choice of *wh*-cleft variant by (potential) additional FP syllables

The interpretation that can be derived from Figure 1 is that when using amalgam clefts involves additional effort (more syllables), speakers opt to produce the simpler standard variant. However, it is more common to use the amalgam when only a single syllable is repeated like in example (66) below:

(66) What **he** did is **he** played football.

Third, the number of clauses in the FP is also a factor which speakers consider when choosing between *wh*-clefts and amalgam clefts. When the FPs are more complex they are more likely to appear in the amalgam form as it shown in Figure 2 below (adapted from Koops and Ross-Hagebaum, 2008:467):

Figure 2: Choice of wh-cleft variant by number of FP clauses

Figure 2 shows that the *wh*-cleft is strongly preferred when the FP is formed only by a single clause. In the case of amalgam clefts, however, their use does not change as much depending on the number of FP clauses (see example (67) below). And we can also see that amalgam clefts occur with much longer FPs.

(67) What a child will do is he will play football, he will eat sweets, he will watch TV, and he will sleep a lot.

We see that the FP of the amalgam cleft in (67) contains four independent main clauses.

3.3. Summary

We have seen that there are four types of amalgam clefts: amalgam pseudocleft, reverse amalgam pseudocleft, *that's x is y* type amalgam cleft and question-answer amalgam. Amalgam clefts are principally used in spoken language as they are used to direct the interlocutor's attention to the focus of the sentence, which is more common during the oral communicative act. Their function also determines their use in spoken communication: they are used to organize the discourse (Calude, 2008:100-104), just like the rest of information packaging constructions.

The FP of amalgam clefts is, contrary to standard pseudoclefts, an independent-like clause. The components of amalgam clefts are: the variable, the value, the counterweight and the weight. Looking at the form of these components, we can conclude that there are several properties that characterize amalgam clefts. Firstly, the value of amalgam clefts can take more syntactic categories than the value of *wh*-clefts. Secondly, although the counterweight occurs in what appears to be an embedded clause position, the counterweight is an independent clause and not an embedded clause as it

has root properties: it cannot be introduced by the complementizer *that*; in the interrogative form it has root word order; and it can undergo topicalization and locative inversion. Thirdly, amalgam clefts are not pseudoclefts as they show many differences: multiple *wh*-expressions can be used in amalgam clefts but not in pseudoclefts; sluicing is possible in amalgam but not in pseudoclefts; and amalgam cannot appear in ECM and raising contexts and pseudoclefts can. Fourthly, the behaviour of the copula demonstrates that it has lost its copulative function: the copula cannot appear with auxiliaries, modals or negation. The explanation that has been given by O'Neill (2012:3) is that the copula in amalgam clefts has a coordinating function. That is, the copula in amalgam clefts coordinates the weight and the counterweight.

Finally, contextual factors determine the use of amalgam clefts: it is common to use amalgam clefts when the predicate of the *wh*-clause is *do*, when only one syllable is repeated between the *wh*-clause and the FP, and when there are multiple FP clauses.

4. Related structures

In this section I discuss and illustrate two structures that are related to amalgam clefts: the *ISIS*-construction and subject contact relatives.

4.1. The *ISIS*-construction

In this section we tackle a construction that contains two instances of *is* in a row and which may be somehow related to amalgam clefts. This construction has been referred to in different ways in the literature on the topic: reduplicative copula (Curzan, 2012), double-*Is* construction (Coppock and Staum, 2004:1-8; Lambrecht and Ross-Hagebaum, 2006), ISIS (Calude, 2008:112), double BE (Calude, 2008:112) and double copula (Calude, 2008:112). In what follows I refer to it as *ISIS*, simply because this term is more striking and, thus, easier to remember.

The *ISIS*-construction is illustrated in (68) below:

(68) The fact of the matter **is is** that the students do not like literature courses.

We can observe in (68) that the copula is repeated, which is the reason behind its name. Later on in this section we will refer to the first *is* as be_1, and the second *is* as be_2.

According to McConvell (1988:287), the *ISIS*-construction is used in spoken language of American, Australian and British English. Just like it happens in the case of amalgams, there are different types of *ISIS* constructions, as shown in examples (69) and (70) below:

(69) What I am thinking **is is** that I need to study hard (*wh*-cleft *ISIS*)

(70) The problem **is is** that I do not want to go home. (Equational *ISIS*)

We see that in example (69) the subject is a *wh*-clause and in example (70) the precopular part is a NP, in this case, *the problem*.

Several hypotheses have been proposed in the literature to account for the structure of *ISIS*-sentences. Firstly, Massam (1999) suggests that there is an empty *what* at the beginning of the construction, as in (71) below:

(71) ~~What~~ the point is is that my father wants to go to Madrid.

However, for this hypothesis to be acceptable, we should be able to insert a *what* in all *ISIS* constructions. This is not the case, as clearly shown in (72) below:

(72) a. What I'm saying is is that I want to read a new book.

　　b.*What what I'm saying is is that I want to read a new book.

The ungrammaticality of (72b) shows that Massam's (1999) hypothesis cannot be maintained.

Secondly, McConvell's hypothesis (1988) is that *ISIS*-constructions represent a blend between the two analyses of pseudoclefts given in (73a) and (73b):

(73) a. [What I'm thinking] is that I should play football.

　　b. [What I'm thinking is], that I should play football.

Putting them together yields (74):

(74) [What I'm thinking is] [is that I should play football].

In this analysis *What I'm thinking is* is considered a constituent. However, we know that this sequence is not a syntactic constituent as it cannot be replaced by a pro-form as shown by the ungrammaticality (75) below:

(75) *It that I should play football.

The ill-formedness of (75) shows that the sequence *What I'm thinking is* is not a constituent as constituents can be pronominalized. Following McConvell's (1988) analysis, if *be₂* was a copulative verb it should agree in number with the subject of the sentence. However, this is not the case, as shown in (76) below:

(76) a.   The difficult problems of life **are**, **is** that poverty is killing people.
    b. *The difficult problems of life **are**, **are** that poverty is killing people.

The contrast between (76a) and (76b) shows that *be₂* does not agree in number with the subject which, in turn, provides evidence that it is not a copula.

Thirdly, Massam (1999) and McConvel (1988) suggest that *be₂* is a focus particle. That is, it is a particle that introduces the FP of the sentence as shown in example (77) below:

(77) The problem is is that **the exam has been really difficult**.

In example (77) the focus particle *be₂* introduces the FP *the exam has been really difficult*.

In conclusion, considering *be₂* as a focus marking particle is the solution for the problem arisen by Massam's (1999) *what*-drop theory and it also explains why there is not number agreement between the subject and *be₂*: it is not a copula, but a focus particle.

Therefore, the connection between the amalgam clefts and double *is* construction is that in both cases there is an apparent copula that does not have a copulative function; it has a coordinating function in the case of amalgam, and a focus marking function in the case of *ISIS*.

4.2. Subject contact relatives

In English it is common to leave the relative pronoun out of a defining relative clause when the relative pronoun has the Direct Object (DO) function or when it is the complement of a preposition, as in examples (78) and (79) below:

(78) This is the man (that) you offended.

(79) This is the man (that) you asked me about.

We can see in example (78) that the use of the relative pronoun is optional as it functions as the DO of the verb *offend*. In (79) the relative pronoun is also optional as it is the complement of the preposition *about*. However, in many different varieties of English (e.g. Belfast English and Appalachian English) the relative pronoun can also be eliminated when it functions as the subject. These constructions are called subject contact relatives and they seem to be somehow related to amalgam clefts. Consider (80) and (81) below:

(80) I have a friend plays football.
(81) There's a teacher wants to speak with you.

We observe that (80) and (81) resemble canonical relatives but without the relative pronoun, in this case, *who*. Subject contact relatives are composed by a sentence with a NP, which is the subject of the relative clause. The common environments for subject contact relatives are these: with existential *have* as in (80), copular existential as (81), with *it*-cleft as (82), with copular verbs as (83), with modals as (84), with quantifiers as (85) and with verbs that introduce a new person or thing into the discourse as (86) below (all examples are adapted from Den Dikken, 2005:694):

(82) It was Mary bought it.
(83) That is the storm is causing fear in people.
(84) I want to meet someone can play the piano.
(85) Everyone goes to literature class has read Shakespeare.
(86) I met a teenager is travelling around the world.

We see in examples (80) to (86) the type of sentences that are most typically associated with subject contact relatives.

It has been claimed that subject contact relatives are topic-comment structures (Den Dikken, 2005:698). That is, the first clause is the topic, which introduces an individual. Information about the individual is provided in the relative clause, which is the comment. Therefore, according to Den Dikken (2005:698), the individual "functions as a focus within a topic clause whose function is precisely to set up a focus for the comment clause".

Den Dikken (2005:695) questions the hypothesis that subject contact relatives can be cases of relative clauses in which the relative pronoun is elided. This hypothesis is rejected for two reasons. Firstly, Henry (1995:126) explains that all subject contact relatives have an alternative with an overt pronoun, which can be seen in example (87) below. However, relative clauses do not have an alternative with an overt pronoun as shown in example (88) below:

(87) a.   There is a woman likes playing football.

b.   There is a woman she likes playing football.

(88) a.   I met a man who listens to rock music.

b. *I met a man who he listens to rock music.

Notice that both options are valid contact relatives in (87) (that is, both null and overt **she** are possible), whereas only the null version is possible in the regular relative in (88).

Secondly, according to Henry (1995:126), the distribution of subject contact relatives does not match with the distribution of regular relatives. For instance, not all regular relatives can have their corresponding subject contact relative. Consider example (89) and (90) below:

(89) a.   The boy passed the exam who has studied a lot.

b. *The boy passed the exam has studied a lot.

(90) a.   They ate with friends who have come from Dublin.

b. *They ate with friends have come from Dublin.

The grammaticality contrasts above show that regular relatives and subject contact relatives cannot occur in the same syntactic contexts. Henry (1995:126) states that in subject contact relatives the first clause is a presentational sentence which introduces a new individual, and that the second clause makes a comment about the individual. The problem in (89b) and (90b) is that the first clause is not presentational. This distributional condition does not operate on regular relatives and that is why (89a) and (90a) are grammatical.

In conclusion, the two factors that I have just mentioned demonstrate that there is not a relative clause in subject contact relatives. That is, subject contact relatives are

not canonical relatives in which the pronoun or the complementizer is phonologically null (Den Dikken, 2005:699). Therefore, we see some limited resemblance between amalgams and subject contact relatives: in both cases there is an independent-like clause in a position where a dependent subordinate clause is expected.

5. A brief look at other languages

All the languages I am familiar with have different strategies to mark the focus and introduce the topic. However, it is not so common to find structures that apart from emphasizing the focus and introducing the topic use an independent-like clause in a dependent position, as it is the case of amalgam clefts. I have found a complex sentence in spoken German called Apokoinu that consists of two independent clauses. According to Meinunger (2011:1), the main characteristic of this structure is that "the last section of the first clause functions simultaneously as the initial part of the second clause." Consider example (91) below:

(91) Das ist was ganz Komisches ist das!
that is what wholly strange is that
This is rather something really strange... (Meinunger, 2011:1, example (1))

We can observe that (91) is formed by two independent clauses, *das ist was ganz Komisches* and *was ganz Komisches ist das*. Thus, *was ganz Komisches* is related to both independent clauses.

As I am more familiarized with Spanish, in the remainder of the present section I present two related structures in Spanish. Firstly, in the Spanish spoken in the Basque Country (and maybe in other varieties of Spanish) it is common to hear reverse amalgam pseudoclefts. Consider example (92) below:

(92) A: Sécate que estás mojada.
Dry 2sg Imperative that be 2sg present wet
Dry yourself because you are wet

B: Estoy sudando es lo que estoy
Be 1sg present sweat be 3sg present what be 1sg present
I am sweating is what I am

Example (92) is a real example of a natural conversation in Basque Spanish. In fact, it took place between my supervisor (A) and her daughter (B). We can see that example

(92) is a reverse amalgam pseudocleft. However, it is not so common to find amalgam clefts. That is, I will not expect example (93) below:

(93) A: Sécate que estás mojada.
       Dry 2sg Imperative that be 2sg present wet
       Dry yourself because you are wet

    B: ?Lo que estoy es estoy sudando
       What be 1sg present be 3sg present be 1sg present sweat
       What I am is I am sweating

We can observe in example (93) that amalgam clefts are not as productive as reverse amalgam pseudoclefts in the Spanish of the Basque Country.

In example (92) the sequence *estoy sudando* is the counterweight, which contains the value of the variable, in this case, *sudando*, which specifies the non-referential constituent in the weight. The weight is *lo que estoy*, which contains the variable, which has been previously specified as it is a reverse amalgam cleft. The FP is an independent-like clause, in this case the sequence *estoy sudando*, which appears in the syntactic place of a dependent clause. The subject, which is elided as Spanish is a pro-drop language, and the verb of both the independent-like clause and the *wh*-clause are identical. That is, both clauses contain amalgamated linguistic material.

Secondly, there is another structure in Spanish that is related to the amalgam cleft construction. It is used in different varieties of Spanish and it is called the focalizing *ser* 'to be' construction. It is interesting to analyse this structure as it has an independent-like clause in a position that is not expected, as is the case in amalgam clefts.

According to Méndez Vallejo (2009:1), the focalizing *ser* (FS) construction is used in Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama and Dominican Republic. Consider examples (94) and (95) below:

(94) Juan necesita es un descanso.
    Juan need-3sg be 3sg present is a rest
    It was a rest that Juan needs.

(95) María estudió fue matemáticas.
    Maria study 3sg past be 3sg past mathematics
    It was mathematics that Maria studied.

We can observe in (94) and (95) that the verb *ser* 'to be' is in the middle of an apparent simple clause. That is, the apparently only difference between a simple sentence and FS is that the verb *to be* is inserted in the latter. However, FS can only be used in specific discourse contexts. According to Méndez Vallejo (2009:1), FSs are used "as an answer to a question, or in response to a comment", as shown in (96) below:

(96) A: ¿Peter no escribe una carta?
   Peter not write 3sg present a letter
   Is Peter not writing a letter?

   B: No, Peter escribe es un libro.
   No Peter write 3sg present be 3sg present a book
   No, it is a book that Peter writes.

We can see in (96) that FS are used in specific contexts, such as answers.

Amalgam cleft constructions and focusing *ser* constructions are related as in none of the two constructions the copula has a copulative function. That is, the copula of a FS construction does not function as a copula (Méndez Vallejo, 2009:28). If the verb *ser* is a copula, it introduces a predicate. However, in the FS construction it introduces the focus element. The fact that FS can follow copula predicates as in (97) and (98) below shows that FS are not copula verbs:

(97) Estoy es enfadado porque no me llamaste.
   Be 1sg present be 3sg present angry because not pro call 2sg past
   It is angry that I am because you did not call me.

(98) Nosotros somos es estudiantes de inglés.
   We be 1pl present be 3sg present English students
   It is English students that we are.

The grammaticality of (97) and (98) shows that the copula does not have copulative function as it can appear after copulative verbs such as *estar* o *ser*, which is impossible if the copula has a copulative function.

There is the alternative position that the copula is an auxiliary. However, example (99) rejects this hypothesis:

(99) Estamos es comiendo chocolate en casa.
   Be 1pl present be 3sg present eat PROGR chocolate at home
   It is eating chocolate that we are doing at home.

In example (99) the copula *es* appears next to the auxiliary *estamos*. It is not possible to have two auxiliaries together. Thus, the grammaticality of (99) demonstrates that the copula is not an auxiliary.

We have seen that the focalizing *ser* is neither a copulative verb nor an auxiliary. Therefore, Méndez Vallejo (2009:33) concludes that FS functions "as some "connector" between the presupposed and the non-presupposed (new) portions of the utterance". Consider example (100) below:

(100) La profesora propuso fue un ejercicio oral.
     The teacher propose 3sg past be 3sg past an oral exercise
     It was an oral exercise that the teacher proposed.

In (100) the verb *ser* is the link between the presupposed information "the teacher proposes something" and the new information "an oral exercise".

We have seen in section 5 structures related to amalgam clefts in German –the Apokoinu construction– and Spanish –the reverse amalgam pseudocleft and the FS construction–. The form of FS is a simple sentence in which the verb *to be* is inserted. However, we have seen that FS constructions and simple clauses have more differences as FS constructions are only used in specific discourse contexts. We have seen that the copula of FS constructions does not have copulative function, but the function of connecting the presupposed and the new information (Méndez Vallejo, 2009:33). This is reminiscent of the non-copulative function of *be* forms in amalgams, forms that seem to have a coordinating role in this type of cleft.

6. Conclusion

I have given a broad description of the amalgam cleft construction. Firstly, I have set up the context for understanding amalgam cleft constructions, that is, I have explained what information packaging is and how it gets manifested in English. In particular contexts some constituents are moved around the sentence in order to mark their informative importance in the sentence: one way of marking the focus is using different information-packaging constructions. One of the information-packaging constructions used in English is clefts. At first sight, the amalgam cleft constructions seem to constitute a special case of *wh*-cleft; however, since they both are subject to different restrictions they cannot have the same categorical status.

Secondly, this paper has shown the general properties of the construction under examination. Regarding the research questions that I have proposed in section 1, these are the answers that I have found: (i) there are four types of amalgam clefts: amalgam pseudocleft, reverse amalgam pseudocleft, *that's x is y* type amalgam cleft and question-answer amalgam. (ii) The main difference between a regular *wh*-cleft and the amalgam clefts is that the FP of amalgam clefts is, contrary to standard pseudoclefts, an independent-like clause. In addition, I have shown that a regular *wh*-cleft and the amalgam clefts differ in more respects: it is possible to use multiple *wh*-expressions and sluicing in amalgams but not in pseudoclefts and while pseudoclefts can appear in ECM and raising contexts amalgams cannot. (iii) Amalgam cleft constructions, like the rest of information packaging constructions, are used to organize the discourse; for instance, they can be used to explain the reason of an earlier statement, to take the floor in a conversation, to relate two prior utterances, to provide opinions, evaluations and assessments, to take the floor in a conversation, and to highlight the value which the cleft points to (Calude, 2008:100-104). Additionally, *that's x is y* constructions are used to specify the referent of the demonstrative. (iv) One syntactic analysis that has been provided by O'Neill (2012, 2015) is that the copula of amalgam clefts does not have a copulative function, but a coordinating function.

Thirdly, I have expanded on the similarities between amalgams and other related structures such as *ISIS* and subject contact relatives. Amalgam clefts and ISIS are similar as in both cases the copula has lost the copulative function. The similarity between amalgam clefts and subject contact relatives is that both constructions have an independent-like clause in a position where a dependent subordinate clause is expected. Finally, I have presented related structures in other languages: the Apokoinu construction in German and the reverse amalgam pseudocleft and the FS construction in Spanish. The resemblance between amalgam clefts and FS is again that their copula does not function as a copula.

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