

Complementing Amalgam Clefts*

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Park, Cheon-Bae. “Complementing Amalgam Clefts.” *Studies in English Language & Literature* 45.4 (2019): 183-209. This study introduces the following English amalgam cleft and attempts to offer an adequate analysis for this construction: *He needs a break is what he needs*. One popular analysis posits a Topic-Comment structure in which this sentence consists of two independent finite clauses linked by the copula *is*. This study, however, observes that the apparent finite clause preceding the copula displays the properties of the root clause and thus claims that this part is not really an independent clause linked with the following *wh*-clause. Under the Topic-Comment analysis, the copula is regarded as a Topic marker. But this study claims that it is a usual copula that appears in clefts in general. The analysis that reflects the above claims is offered as follows: *He needs* [_{FocP} *a break* [_{TP} *pro is [what he needs]* _{TP}] _{FocP}]. This structure well captures the fact that the [_{DP} *a break*] is understood as the direct object of the matrix verb *need* as well as the subject of the copula *is*. The discussion of the study advocates for the direct complementation analysis involving **FocP**, against the previous Topic-Comment analysis. Further, this study extends the proposed analysis to a similar construction named subject contact relatives, showing that amalgamation of the two apparent clauses is in fact widely made through **FocP** complementation. (Wonkwang University)

Key Words: Amalgam clefts, copula, Topic-Comment analysis, direct complementation analysis, subject contact relatives

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1. Introduction

The main purposes of this paper are to discuss the phenomenon of Amalgam Cleft in spoken English, and to suggest a proper analysis on the structure. We will begin with the following well-known sample sentences (den Dikken et al. 2000, O'Neill 2015, Landa 2018).

- (1) What he needs is he needs a break. (Amalgam pseudoclefts)
- (2) He needs a break is what he needs. (Reversed amalgam pseudoclefts)

These kinds of structures are rarely used in written texts, but are reported to be used frequently in colloquial settings such as conferences, personal conversations, lectures, interviews, TV shows, etc., in spoken dialects of various English speaking countries including USA, Canada, UK, Australia, and New Zealand (Yale University 2017). The structures have been treated in some papers, but still considered to be one of peripheral linguistic topics (den Dikken et al. 2000, O'Neill 2012, 2015, Landa 2018). Such amalgam structures, however, should be regarded as a valuable material, for spoken language is directly produced from the speakers' free and unsuppressed mechanism reflecting their mind, revealing their spontaneous logic and rules of language; written language, on the other hand, only shows strictly-regulated and refined expressions prescribed by the language education blocking the free use of language.

The structure under consideration apparently consists of a *wh*-clause, the copula *is*, and a seemingly independent clause. The typical amalgam cleft such as the example in (1) shows that the *wh*-clause occurs before the copula *is*, but it is possible for the clause to take the position after the copula in an inverted sentence like (2). So the independent clause takes the complement position in (1) while it takes the subject position in (2). Here the *wh*-clause represents the part of presupposition while the independent clause contains new information. The

amalgam structure is an especially intriguing topic because the naturally independent clause occurs in the position of subordinate clause. This structure is called as such because the part of the subject and the predicate, that is, *he needs*, is overlapped or amalgamated with the part in the clause following the copula *is*. It is also known as amalgam specificational copular sentences, because the content of *wh*-clause is specified in the other clause in the sentence (Lambrecht 2001, O'Neill 2016).

Another characteristic of amalgam cleft is the fact that it is very similar to pseudocleft structure. The following are the examples of pseudocleft sentences.

- (3) *What he needs* is a break. (*wh*-cleft)
(4) A break is *what he needs*. (Reversed *wh*-cleft)

The focus, or the specified part, in this sentence (3) is a phrase “a break”, not a clause. Although the different characteristics between two structures will also be discussed later in this paper, the two structures will be regarded as basically the same structure.

The amalgam cleft in question will look like two finite clauses connected together by the copula *is*, as seen below.

- (5) [He needs a break] is [what he needs]

Thus, there is a view that the structure is the result of coordination by the coordinator “*is*” (O'Neill 2012, Landa 2018). This view suggests that the structure in question has a Topic-Comment structure after all. This paper, however, will notice that the analysis cannot account for some characteristics of the structure. The point is that the clause in front of the copula *is* shows the characteristics of a root clause, but not of a subordinate clause. In other words, a plausible analysis of it should be that “a break” is the object of the verb *needs* of the root clause and is

also the subject of the copula *is*. This analysis will be elaborated in later sections.

On the other hand, the amalgam cleft under consideration is surprisingly similar to a relative clause with no subject relative pronoun, which is so-called Subject Contact Relatives, as shown below (Den Dikken 2005, Landa 2018).

(6) That is the storm *is* causing fear in people.

(7) I know a teacher *plays* the violin.

‘I know a teacher who plays the violin.’

In (6), *is* is not the copula but the progressive auxiliary whereas in (7) we find the main verb *plays*.

In the former sentence, “*the storm*” acts as the complement of the verb *is* of the root clause as well as the subject of the progressive *is*; in the latter, the phrase “*a teacher*” behaves as the object of the main verb *know* and, at the same time, the subject of the verb “*plays*.” Its peculiarity is the fact that the auxiliary *is* or the verb *plays* doesn’t link the two parts before and after each verbal element as a topic and comment in both sentences, which means that the two elements should not be considered to constitute a Topic-Comment structure. Moreover, the part after the verbs, *is* and *plays*, does not constitute an independent clause. In this connection, therefore, it is not plausible that the copula *is* in amalgam cleft sentences should be viewed as a coordinator or a topic marker.

The main purpose of the study is to suggest a more adequate analysis on the structure of amalgam cleft sentences introduced. Through this process, we will explore how two clauses are amalgamated under the complementation analysis. This will reveal the nature of the copula *is* in amalgam cleft sentences. That is, it is not a Topic marker, but belongs to the category of typical copular verbs. It will be also shown that the conclusion of the argument will be reinforced by the discussion of the other similar structures.

2. The Characteristics of Amalgam Clefts

Before continuing the discussion, we will first name each constituent of amalgam clefts for the cohesive reference to each element.

(8) [He needs [a break]] is [what he needs X].

In (8), X in the *wh*-clause refers to a variable, and the phrase [a break] has its specified value carrying a focus. This study will not follow the analysis of (5), which argues for the coordination of two clauses by the coordinator “*is*,” but the *wh*-clause will be called ***weight*** and the rest part including the detailed specification and the focus value as ***counterweight*** adopting O’Neill’s (2012) terminology. Other example sentences will be introduced below to clarify the characteristics of the structure.

2.1. Various Categories and Functions of Value

The value in the counterweight of amalgam clefts turns out to be of various syntactic categories as discussed in O’Neill (2015: 12-13).

(9) What they like is they like [DP chocolate].

(10) What Mary is is she is [AP beautiful].

(11) Where she left the book is she left the book [PP on the table].

(12) What I will do is I will [VP study hard].

(13) How John drives is John drives [AdvP quickly].

(14) Why he is shouting is [CP she is angry].

The value can be realized in various categories as the labels of the phrases in the counterweight part show. The example sentence (14) is a peculiar example of

amalgam cleft in that the variable is a proposition and its value is realized as a clause.¹ It should also be noted that the value part in the structure performs such various syntactic functions as object in (9), locative complement in (11), predicate in (12), adjunct in (13) and (14).²

2.2. Differences between Amalgam clefts and Pseudoclefts

In (9)-(13) in which only the variable part can remain without the rest of the clause from the counterweight clauses, as seen in (15)-(19), the so-called pseudoclefts.

(15) What they like is [_{DP} chocolate].

(16) What Mary is is [_{AP} beautiful].

(17) Where she left the book is [_{PP} on the table].

(18) What I will do is [_{VP} study hard].

(19) How John drives is [_{ADV_P} quickly].

The consideration of these sentences might lead to the conclusion that a pseudocleft is a sentence produced by omitting the rest of the counterweight clause leaving only the focused value in an amalgam cleft. But this is not reasonable because it has been reported that amalgam clefts are more productive than

¹ In the variable clause of the amalgam cleft above, *who* and *which* are somehow rarely used (O'Neill 2015: 18-19). This restriction does not apply in reverse amalgam cleft (Landa 2018: 14).

- (i) a. ?Who he loves he loves Mary.
 b. He loves Mary is who he loves.
 (ii) a. She likes Romeo and Juliet is which book she likes.
 b. *Which book she likes is she likes Romeo and Juliet.

² It is reported that it even performs the subject function, though not commonly found (Landa 2018, (40).

- (i) ?What killed John is smoking killed him.

pseudoclefts in the case of containing a VP-value (Koops and Ross-Hagebaum 2008, O'Neill 2015, Landa 2018).

- (20) a. I should have read the book is what I should have done.
 b. %Read the book I should have read the book. (%: less productive)

Thus, it may be necessary to draw a line between the amalgam cleft structure and the seemingly similar pseudocleft structure.³

In fact, O'Neill (2012: 19) noticed differences in many aspects between the two structures. One of them is the fact that the amalgam cleft can make a multiple interrogative, whereas the pseudocleft cannot, as illustrated below.

- (21) a. *Who* ate *what* is Jill ate a pizza and Jack ate fries.
 b. We should put the lamp on the desk and the table in the corner
 is *what* we should put *where*.
 (22) **What* we should put *where* will be the lamp on the desk and the
 table in the corner.

Another is related to the sluicing phenomenon, in which a TP-constituent can be omitted after a *wh*-phrase in a compound sentence.

- (23) John likes someone but I don't know *who* [_{TP} John likes].

This sluicing is not possible in pseudoclefts; in contrast, amalgam clefts allow the TP omission.⁴

³ Koops and Ross-Hagebaum (2008: 464) reported that, in the case of VP-variable values, the respective proportion of occurrences in typical pseudocleft sentences and amalgam clefts is 47% and 53% respectively. On the contrary, it is said that, when the categories of the value are DP, AP, PP, etc., the pseudocleft structure is preferred to the amalgam cleft.

⁴ See Landa (2018: 15-16) for other structures, for example, the difference between ECM and raising

- (24) a. You should invite Jack is who you should invite.
 b. They went up the hill is where they went.
- (25) *Up the hill is where they went.

These discrepancies between the two structures made us conclude that amalgam cleft structure constitutes an independent category with unique, interesting peculiarities.

2.3 Coordination vs. Direct Complementation

In order to argue against the contention that the verb *is* is not a copula but a kind of Topic Marker, we will have to certify its identification as a copula (O'Neill 2012: 18-20, 2015: 10-11). Apparently, the two clauses located at both sides of the copula *is* give the impression that they are coordinated by the *is* as a coordinator.

- (5) [He needs a break] is [what he needs]

Such a view might lead us to regard the first finite sentential part as the subject of the copula, and the second finite clause as a complement. In order for the view to be reasonable, however, the first finite clause as a subject should be able to be inverted with the copula *is*, resulting in a yes/no-interrogative. The truth is that the inversion causes unacceptability to the output similar as shown in (26), which suggests that their structures are different from the other usual constructions allowing yes/no-interrogative in (27) (O'Neill 2015: 240).

- (26) *Is [he needs a break] [what he needs]?
- (27) a. Is [important to himself] [what John is]?

b. Is coffee [what she likes]?

Of course, this does not lead directly to the conclusion that the verb *is* should not be considered to be a copula, for there is no guarantee that the counterweight is the clausal subject of this sentence. In fact, it was observed that the clause of counterweight which comes first in a sentence has a property of root clause (Landa 2018, 13-14).

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

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

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

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

The facts that the complementizer “that” is not allowed in the first clause of (28), that “*did*” has been fronted into the position before the subject of it while forming a *wh*-question in (29), and that Topicalization and Locative Fronting occurs in the first clausal part in (30)-(31), show that the clausal counterweight is a root clause. In short, the previous analysis of the sentence in (5) cannot properly account for the properties of such root clauses in the structure in question.

It follows from this that the clausal part in front of the verb *is* in question, *i.e.*, the so-called counterweight, is in fact the matrix clause, and that the clause of the weight should be a complement of the copula, as shown below.

(32) He needs [a break is [what he needs]]

The above analysis can capture the fact that the phrase [a break] or the (so-called) value should be understood as the object of the verb *needs* in the main clause and, at the same time, as the subject of the complement clause. In this analysis, the verb *is* is in the variable clause, which is now a complement clause,

and thus, the status of it is certainly a copula. In the already introduced amalgam cleft sentence in (1), which begins with *wh*-clause, the copula *is* was conjectured as a kind of Topic indicator by O’Neil (2015); however, detailed argumentations should be preceded to give the conjecture its solid ground, for it turns out to be a copula in a specific cleft sentence. See the pseudocleft sentences in (15)-(16), for sample sentences. The more detailed analysis will be given in Section 3, reflecting the construction of the interpretation in (32).

2.4. The Status of the Copula *is*

Here, the materials will be examined to identify the status of the verb *is* in amalgam clefts. First of all, this copula can be inflected according to the tense such as *is* and *was*, and these tenses depend on the verbs, which are doubly used in the weight part and the counterweight part (O’Neill 2016: 7).

- (33) a. What she *liked* was she *liked* the choreography. (*likes)
 b. She *liked* the choreography was what she *liked*. (*likes)

The same is true of the pseudoclefts.

- (34) a. What she *liked* was the choreography. (*likes)
 b. The choreography was what she *liked*. (*likes)

Another characteristic of amalgam clefts is that the copula cannot occur in a sentence with a perfect setting (i.e., together with *have*, *had*, etc.), or a modal auxiliary, or the negative word *not* (O’Neill 2016: 12-13, Landa 2018: 16-17).

- (35) a. *What she liked *had* always been she liked coffee.
 b. *She liked coffee *had* always been what she liked.

- (36) a. *What they('ll) need *will* be they('ll) need a vacation.
 b. *They('ll) need a vacation *will* be what they('ll) need.
- (37) a. *What she likes *isn't* she likes coffee.
 b. *She likes coffee *isn't* what she likes.

Some scholars view that the facts revealed above suggest that the verb under consideration is not the pure copula (O'Neill 2012: 18-29, Landa 2018: 17). This point of view is based on the fact that perfect aspect markers, modal auxiliaries, and the negative *not*, in contrast, can be used in pseudoclefts (O'Neill 2012: 18-29).⁵

- (38) a. What she liked *had* always been coffee.
 b. Coffee *had* always been what she did.
- (39) a. What they('ll) need *will* be a vacation.
 b. A vacation *will* be what they('ll) need.
- (40) a. What she likes *isn't* coffee.
 b. Coffee *isn't* what she likes.

The above contrast leads us to two different conjectures. The first assertion by O'Neill (2016) is that the verb *is* is none other than a copula in pseudoclefts whereas it is not a typical copula but a Topic indicator in amalgam clefts. In short, the former should be argued to be dominated by a V-node, but the latter should belong to the constituents under C category (for example, Fin / Top+Fin) according to Rizzi's split-up system (Rizzi (1977)). According to O'Neill (2016), therefore, the two seemingly closely-related clefts should be treated as totally

⁵ On the other hand, other facts are also pointed out beside the contrast between a amalgam cleft in (36) and a pseudocleft in (39).

(i) a. *Mary is beautiful *isn't* what Mary is. (Landa 2018: 7)
 b. *What John is *isn't* proud of himself. (Higgins 1973: 321)

In the pseudocleft sentence (ib) above, unlike (39), the variable is a complement of copula *is*, which is not as good as the same type of amalgam cleft (ia).

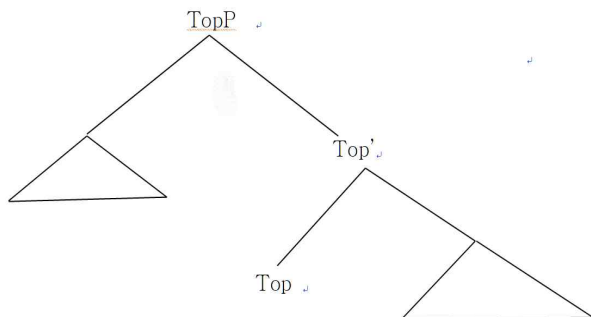
different structures.

O'Neill (2012, 2015) regarded that the verb *is* in question does not have ordinary copulative characteristics, but instead have a function of connecting the two clauses, i.e., the part of weight and the part of counterweight, which means that the element under consideration is not a copula but a type of Topic marker inserted to help the features $[T, \phi]$ in C to be realized. To be more specific, in the split-up structure by Rizzi (1977), i.e. the nucleus skeletal structure of Force-Mood-Top-Fin, the copula is inserted into Fin $[+fin, T, \phi]$ or is combined with $Top[T, \phi]$ to be realized as “*is*.” In the example (2), repeated below, in which the weight does not raise, but remain in the same position, the copula is located in Fin as in (42); and in the case of (1), Fin is raised to Top to combine into Top+Fin as in (41), to be realized as the verb *is* after all.

- (1) What he needs is he needs a break. (Amalgam pseudoclefts)
 (2) He needs a break is what he needs. (Reversed amalgam pseudoclefts)
 (41) $[_{TopP} [_{what\ he\ needs}]_i [_{Top'} [_{Top} is_j [_{FinP} [he\ needs\ a\ break]$
 $[_{Fin'} [_{Fin} t_j [t_i]]]]]]]]]$
 (42) $[_{TopP} [_{Top'} [_{Top} [_{FinP} [he\ needs\ a\ break] [_{Fin'} [_{Fin} is [[What\ he\ needs]]]]]]]]]]]$

Thus, both of the structures above, which apparently look like having a structure of (43), turn out to be different from each other, because the amalgam cleft in (2) has the structure of (32) and does not have the (coordinate) structure of (43). The first clause located before the copula in (43) should not be construed as a root clause in that it is located in the position of the specifier of FinP as a subject. Moreover, it is doubted whether a sentence can be constructed with only the Force-Top-Fin structure without V and T in the core skeletal structure of Topic-Comment.

(43)



When the fact is considered that amalgam cleft sentences and pseudocleft sentences are commonly specificational constructions involving the copula, on the other hand, what the contrast between the two structures implies is that the limits of the verb *is* in amalgam clefts may not be because of its identity as not being a copula but because of some other factors that amalgam clefts have. This means that, when the value in the counterweight is specified for the variable in the weight clause, the identity factor might lie behind the limits of the verb *is*, that is, the subject is shared along with the predicate, *i.e.*, *he needs*, in (1)-(2).

O'Neill (2016: 8-9) also observed the difference in tense interpretation in pseudoclefts and amalgam clefts. On the one hand, a normal sentence, for example, has two interpretation of its tense.

(44) I thought that John's house was blue. (O'Neill 2016, (15))

One of the interpretations is that the property of being *blue* belongs to the same point of time as the verb *thought* refers to in the main clause; another is that it belongs to the PAST of the PAST time which the verb *thought* refers to: the so-called past-shifted tense interpretation.

O'Neill (2016) elaborated the discrepancies between the pseudoclefts and

amalgam clefts especially in connection with the past-shifted tense interpretation, considering the amalgam clefts as in (45). The capitalized copula WAS represents a contrastive focus, and O'Neill assumed this was able to make the past-shifted tense interpretation more salient.

(45) I thought that what John listened to [WAS]_F country music. (O'Neill (2016, (16))

The above sentence allows two alternatives for its focus interpretation, such as the following:

(46) Option 1: I thought that what John listened to really/actually *was* country music.

(verum<true, false> focus paraphrase)

Option 2: I thought that what John listened to *had been* country music.

(past-shifted paraphrase)

What is noticeable here is that it has its past-shifted interpretation, which means that the copula in (45) is a true PAST tense copula. In addition, this interpretation implies that, at the time of "the speaker thought," John didn't listen to country music any more. O'Neill (2016: 9-11) experimented on amalgam clefts with reference to the PAST-shifted interpretation. For further discussion, the following example of mine is offered corresponding to (45).

(47) I thought that what John listened to WAS he listened to country music.

The result of his experiment shows that amalgam clefts have no PAST-shifted interpretation. and it is different from that of pseudoclefts (O'Neill, 2016: 11). Her conclusion was that amalgam clefts have no TENSE and that the seeming copula

element is not a real copula. Thus, she assumed the verb *was* is a morphologically realized constituent of “Top+Fin.”

Such a solution, however, needs to argue that the two structures have structural differences in spite of their apparently quite similar structures to each other. So the argument is not very persuasive. The delicate meaning difference between the two structures, as O’Neill (2016: 9) mentioned, is not enough for arguing about their decisively distinct structures. The difference in the two structures, as mentioned before, may not arise from whether the verb *is/was* is a copula or not, but from the identificational factors that amalgam clefts involve.

Finally, another fact that weakens O’Neill (2016) is related to the modality of the sentences in question. Epistemic modals can occur and requires BE in amalgam clefts as in (48), though deontic/root modals are not allowed in the same structure as in (36), repeated below.

(36) a. *What they(‘ll) need *will* be they(‘ll) need a vacation.

b. *They(‘ll) need a vacation *will* be what they(‘ll) need.

(48) a. What he wants *might* {*be/* ϕ /*is*} he wants a raise.

b. He wants a raise *might* {*be/* ϕ /*is*} what he wants.

(Here, ϕ represents *NULL*, *ie.*, the absence of any overt lexical item.)

The uninflected copula BE in (48) can raise a problem with O’Neill’s claim, because the structure will exclude the possibility of the occurrence of the uninflected BE theoretically if the inflected modal takes the position of Fin.

To cover this difficulty, O’Neill introduced Mood under the specified structure of C. The point is that the skeletal head structure is Force-Mood-Fin, and that modal carries Tense under Mood. and have Tense. This treatment thus needs an *ad-hoc* assumption that epistemic modal auxiliaries can occur in Mood while deontic modals can’t.

When the fact is considered that both epistemic and deontic modal auxiliaries

can occur under T in any ordinary TP structure, the addition of the Mood in C structure in amalgam cleft sentences will invite too much *ad hoc* complexity, *i.e.*, only applicable to the epistemic modals but not to deontic modals.

(36) a. *What they('ll) need will be they('ll) need a vacation.

(48) a. What he wants might {be/* ϕ /*is} he wants a raise.

O'Neill assumes that the modal *will* occur under T in pseudoclefts like (39a) just as in any normal sentences. This assumption, however, may be invalidated by the fact that pseudocleft are structurally more similar to amalgam clefts like (36a). This is because the only difference between the two complements is whether the element following the copula *is/be* is a phrase or a clause.

(39) a. What they('ll) need will be a vacation.

From the point of view of derivation, on the other hand, the word order in (48a) can be derived if the *wh*-clause is raised from Spec, FinP to Spec, MoodP. Although it is unclear what motivation is responsible for this movement, let us temporarily assume that it is related to the fact that this *wh*-clause is a topic. Then, of course, a common sentence such as in (49a) below can be derived without any problem when *might* is positioned under T. But another derivation in which the subject *he* undergoes the same movement should also be allowed in (49b) (here *might* is positioned in Mood under Force and above Fin).

(49) a. He might want a raise.

b. *Might he want a raise.

However, this movement of the subject *he* will have little to do with the topic. If this movement has no motivation, it is questionable how the ungrammatical

sentence in (49b) can be blocked for this sentence is allowed to be derived.

To cope with such a trouble, it should be recalled that in amalgam clefts the specificational relation between the weight clause and the counterweight clause presupposes the identity of both parts, unlike in pseudoclefts. Therefore, the copula which equally coordinates these two parts is not consistent with the deontic meaning of modals but with the epistemic meaning of them. Why the negative *not* is not used with the specificational copula in the amalgam clefts such as (37) can also be attributed to the identity between the two parts.

- (37) a. *What she likes isn't she likes coffee.
 b. *She likes coffee isn't what she likes.

The conclusion from the above discussion is that the verb *is* is a typical copula. The usage, however, seems to be limited more or less because of peculiar information structure of the amalgam clefts. This enables us to pursue an analysis in which the two types of clefts basically have a common structure without the demerits of O'Neill's analysis in which these two types have completely different structures. Consequently, the modal in question does not have to be introduced under a specified structure of C. Moreover, while O'Neill's coordinating Topic-Comment structure is not able to capture the fact that the first clause before the copula is a root clause, the current analysis in (32) can well reflect this fact.

- (2) He needs a break is what he needs. (Reversed amalgam pseudoclefts)
 (32) He needs [a break is [what he needs]]

3. The Proposal

As discussed so far, based on the observation that the preceding clause in the

amalgam cleft in (2) has the properties of the root clause, we proposed the structure in (32) and assign temporary labels to this structure in (50). Defining the category of X will be done in subsequent discussion.

(50) He needs [_{XP} a break [_{X'} [_X is [_{CP} what he needs]]]]

The above structure should be able to capture the fact that [_{DP} a break] is interpreted as the object of the main clause verb *needs* and at the same time as the focus subject of the CP cleft clause.⁶

Now let us examine the above structure and complete it in more detail. In (50), the **copula** *is* takes [_{DP} a break] at its Specifier position. Here XP functions as a complement of *needs* and the CP within it functions as a specificational complement of the **copula** *is*. So what is important here is that the fact that the part preceding the copula *is* has a characteristic of a root clause can be captured. Given the structure above, [_{DP} a break] now serves as the focus subject of the CP cleft part and also functions as the direct object of the main verb *needs*. Thus, the label of X is regarded as Focus, and accordingly its full-fledged structure is offered as follows.

(51) He needs [_{FocP} [a break]_i] [_{Foc'} [_{Foc} [_{TP} **pro**_i is [_{CP} what he needs **t**]]]]]

The fact that [a break] has a focus value above is captured as it is located in Spec, Foc. The null subject *pro* appears as a subject in Spec, TP, where *pro* is [-focus] but [a break] has [+focus].⁷ Since there is no projection of C in the above structure, the boundary of the CP phase is not established. What this means is that the focus phrase [a break] can receive Case and a thematic role from the verb *need*

⁶ A reviewer points out a putative problem such that the focus DP [a break] appears to receive two theta-roles under the structure in (50), which is prohibited in the standard analysis. This problem is avoided in the more elaborated structure in (51) below containing *pro* in the embedded subject position.

⁷ In the above structure, [a break] does not move from Spec, TP to Spec, FocP, which can be ascribed to **Merge over Move**.

in the main clause.⁸

The *pro* in the subject position above is confined to the null resumptive pronoun. If other pronouns or referential expressions appear in this subject position, they are in illegal binding relationship with the higher co-referential expression [*a break*]. In other words, the Principles of Binding B and C are violated respectively. This can explain the fact that this *pro* element can occur in amalgam clefts as above, despite the fact that *pro* rarely appears in the subject position in English.⁹

We will now discuss how the present analysis can be applied to other examples. First, we consider the amalgam cleft below.

(52) She is beautiful is what Mary is.

(53) She is [_{FocP} [beautiful]_i] [_{Foc'} [_{Foc} [_{TP} **pro**_i is [_{CP} what Mary is **t**]]]]]

The null subject above refers to *beautiful* and can be regarded as a *pro*-AP. In addition, the same can apply to amalgam clefts in which the variable value is VP, as shown below and to others in which the values of the variables take different categories in *modus operandi*.

(54) I will study hard is what I will do.

(55) I will [_{FocP} [study hard]_i] [_{Foc'} [_{Foc} [_{TP} **pro**_i is [_{CP} what I will do **t**]]]]]

⁸ Of course, the non-focus phrase can never be merged into the **Spec, Foc**.

⁹ A reviewer raises a question as to how the focus DP [*a break*] can receive a theta-role and Case from the matrix verb *need* in (51), which is not an ECM verb in a normal sense. In this structure, this DP awaits Case and a theta-role. Due to the lack of a C projection, no phase boundary is presented in the FocP, as mentioned above; therefore, the focus DP is visible to the matrix verb *need*, which may then assign Case and a theta-role to this DP. To extend the discussion, notice that FocP in (51) can in fact be an extended DP originated from the complement position of the same embedded verb *need*. Thus, it is very likely that the focus DP may relabel the FocP as DP. This then meets the categorial selection between the verb *need* and its DP complement and enables the theta-role assignment as well as Case assignment in question. I leave this conjecture for further study.

The null subject above indicates [*study hard*] and can be regarded as *pro*-VP.¹⁰

On the other hand, the structure of the typical amalgam cleft in (1), repeated below as (56a), is not different from the structure of the pseudo cleft under the present analysis. That is, the *wh*-clause is a subject, and the specification part is a complement of the same copula. The same structure obtains even when the value of the variable belongs to another category.

- (56) a. What he needs is he needs a break. (cf. What he needs is a break.)
 b. [What he needs] is [he needs a break] (cf. [What he needs] is [a break])

4. The Extension of the Discussion

In this section, we will show that the proposed amalgam cleft analysis can also be extended immediately to the subject contact relatives, as presented in the introduction. This construction is known to be acceptable in dialects such as Belfast English or Ulster Scots rather than in Standard English (Henry 1995). Relevant examples are reproduced from (6)-(7) as (57)-(58) below.

(57) That is the storm is causing fear in people.

(58) I have a friend plays the violin.

The progressive auxiliary *is*, a non-copula, occurs in (57) above, and the regular verb *plays* occurs in (58). In the former, *the storm* is the complement of the verb *is* in the root clause, but in other respects it is also the subject of the progressive auxiliary *is*. In this regard, it can be considered a relative clause without a subject pronoun. Of course, the structure in question is not allowed in Standard English but

¹⁰ Often, VP or AP can be omitted from the elliptic construction in English. VP or AP omitted under the LF-copy analysis is considered *pro*-VP/AP, depending on the analysis.

acceptable in some dialects such as Belfast English or Ulster Scots, which may be reduced to some minor dialectal factors.

The following examples show that the construction in question is similar to relative clauses (Henry 1995: 126).

- (59) a. There's one woman in our street [__ went to Spain last year]
 b. There's one woman in our street [*she* went to Spain last year]
 c. There's one woman in our street [*who* went to Spain last year]

Interestingly, unlike in Standard English, the subject relative pronoun may not appear in (59a); instead, a pronoun can appear in (59b). The usual relative pronoun *who* can also appear in (59c). The point here is that (59a) and (59b) are semantically identical to a typical relative clause like (59c).

On the other hand, some other scholars argue that subject contact relatives shown above are different from typical relatives (den Dikken 2005: 695, Henry 1995: 126). Let us take a look at the data used for this claim (Landa 2018: 25).

- (60) a. There is a woman *likes* playing football.
 b. There is a woman *she likes* play football.
 (61) a. I met a man *who listens* to rock music.
 b. *I met a man *who he listens* to rock music.

According to Henry (1995: 126), the subject of the relative clause can alternatively be replaced by a pronoun in the subject contact relatives, as seen in (60b); however, this replacement is not allowed in a typical relative clause, as seen in (61b). Therefore, he argued the former is a Topic-Comment structure like an amalgam cleft. As discussed with an amalgam cleft, however, the structure in question cannot be treated as the Topic-Comment structure because the first clause is a root clause.

The above subject contact relatives have differences from the typical relatives in Belfast English, too (Doherty 1993, 161-162).

- (62) a. The girl [who during the riot [the soldiers shot dead]]
 b. *The girl during the riot [who [the soldiers shot dead]]
 c. *The woman tomorrow [we'll meet __ after lunch]
 d. *That's the girl just yesterday [__ was talking about you]

What is seen in (62a) above is that the adjunct [during the riot] is adjoined to the TP, for it is located between the relative pronoun *who* and the TP above the subject. (62b) shows that this adjunct is not adjoined to the CP above *who*. However, it is revealed that the adjunct is not adjoined to the TP in the object contact relative clause in (62c) and the subject contact relative clause in (62d). Therefore, subject contact relative clauses are different from typical relative clauses and appear to act similarly to object contact relative clauses.

As mentioned above, Henry (1995: 124) identified the subject contact relative clauses as the Topic-Comment structure, as seen below.¹¹

- (63) [_{CP} [_{TopicP} There is a woman] [_{CP} *pro* likes playing football]]

The presentational part above, *i.e.*, [*There is a woman*], is a TopicP and is added to the main clause CP, the Comment part. However, *pro* is not allowed in the main clause.¹²

¹¹ See Williamson (2015) for the claim that the subject contact relative clause is not a typical relative clause nor a Topic-Comment construction. Also, see Henry (1995) and Den Dikken (2005) for the problems with each other's analysis.

¹² In addition, there is discussion about the problem of the Topic-Comment structure (see Williamson 2015, 48-49).

- (64) a. *Seems to be snowing.
 b. *Walked.

In this study, the structure in (50) is seen to help provide a useful clue to suggesting an adequate structure.

(50) He needs [_{XP} a break [_{X'} [_X is [_{CP} what he needs]]]]

There is a striking correspondence between the fact that in (50), [*a break*] is interpreted as the object of the verb *needs* in the root clause and at the same time, as the subject of the verb *is* of the complement clause, and the fact that in (65), [*a woman*] is interpreted as the complement of the verb *is* of the root clause and at the same time, as the subject of the verb *likes* in the complement clause.

(65) There is [_{XP} a woman [_{X'} [_X likes playing football]]]

In (65), X may be Focus in that [*a woman*] represents new information in a presentational context (cf. **There is [the woman] in our street.*). Now (65) can be further elaborated as follows:¹³

(66) There is [_{FocP} [a woman]_i [_{Foc'} [_{Foc} [_{TP} *pro*_i likes playing football]]]]]

In addition, subject contact relatives are not allowed after the non-presentational main verb or in the subject position of the non-presentational context (Henry 95,

¹³ The validity of this analysis can be found in the fact that the usual existential *there*-construction was often analyzed essentially in the same manner as below. In (ib), the XP-complement was considered to be a small clause (Stowell 1978).

- (i) a. There is one woman in our street.
 b. There is [_{XP} [one woman] [in our street]]

125-127).

- (67) a. *I lost the book [__ gives an account of this]
 b. *I was talking to the lecturer [she takes the linguistics course]

Williamson (2015, 31b) suggests that X in (65) is Topic; however, it is questionable whether it can cope with the contrast between (60a) and (67a, b). It is not clear why [*the book*] and [*the lecturer*] in (67a, b) are not allowed even though they are Topic.

The following *it*-cleft well supports the current Focus analysis, though.

- (68) It was *Mary* bought it.

Here, it is well-known that *Mary* typically appears in the focus part of a cleft sentence. Therefore, the structure will be represented as follows.

- (68') It was [_{FocP} [_{Mary}]_i [_{Foc'} [_{Foc} [_{TP} **pro**_i bought it]]]]

A pronoun may occur in the position of the subject of the above FocusP complement, as shown in (60b) below, and the *pro* is seen to have been realized as an overt pronoun in this case.

- (60) a. There is a woman likes playing football.
 b. There is a woman *she* likes play football.
 (61) a. I met a man *who* listens to rock music.
 b. *I met a man *who he* listens to rock music.

On the other hand, (61a) includes a typical relative clause; in (61b) the trace left behind by the substantial *wh*-operator movement is seen to have been resumed as

a pronoun. This would not be permitted if the head *who* and the tail *he* of the chain are not supposed to be pronounced simultaneously in a local area.

In short, we focused our attention on presenting the structure of the representative subject contact relatives, claimed that FocP is crucially involved, and discussed how this phrase is complemented. Some other related facts remain untouched, and their similarities and differences require a separate detailed study.

5. Summary

This paper has introduced an amalgam cleft construction in English, and tried to suggest a proper analysis of the construction.

(62) What he needs *is* he needs a break. (Amalgam pseudoclefts)

(63) He needs a break *is* what he needs. (Reversed amalgam pseudoclefts)

The above sentences are amalgam clefts with two independent tensed clauses connected by the copula *is*, where *he needs* appears on both sides (O'Neill 2015, Landa 2018). In particular, the traditional main stream of the analysis of the pseudoclefts in (63) is the Topic-Comment structure (Henry 1995, Den Dikken 2005, O'Neill 2016, Landa 2018, and others). They view the copula as the Topic marker. This paper argues that the part preceding the copula *is* is not a subordinate clause that behaves as the subject of this copula nor is coordinated by it in that the alleged subject part in (63) displays the nature of a root clause. Thus, we propose an alternative core structure for the construction in question through the complementation of FocP as follows.

(64) He needs [_{FocP} [a break]_i] [_{Foc'} [_{Foc} [_{TP} **pro**_i is [_{CP} what he needs t]]]]]

In this structure, the *wh*-clause is a complement of the copula *is*, and this *is* in turn takes the preceding focused [*a break*] as the subject of it. So it becomes possible for [_{DP} *a break*] to be interpreted as the object of the verb *needs* and at the same time as the subject of the copula *is*. Another amalgam cleft in (62) was argued to have the structure in which [*what he needs*] is the subject of the copula *is* and [*he needs a break*], a finite clause, appears as its complement rather than having a Topic-Comment structure.

(65) [What he needs] [is [he needs a break]]

In sum, the discussion in this study mainly advocated the analysis of direct complementation in (64), refuting the topic-comment structure, and the analysis of (62) applied the same direct complementation in (65). The analysis was also shown to be applicable to subject contact relatives, thereby securing generality of its applicability: the sentence in (66) can be viewed as having the structure in (67) involving FocP complementation.

(66) There is a woman likes playing football.

(67) There is [_{FocP} [a woman]_i [_{Foc'} [_{Foc} [pro_i likes playing football]]]]

There exist some more diverse facts, the detailed study of which requires further study.

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