Where does Pseudo-cleft Construction Come from in Taiwan Southern Min?[*]

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Abstract: In this paper, I use Taiwan Southern Min, a dialect of Mandarin Chinese, as the data to argue that pseudo-cleft construction is derived from cleft construction.

Keywords: cleft construction, pseudo-cleft construction.

1. Introduction

In emphasizing a focus, in addition to stressing or fronting, it is generally agreed that cleft or pseudo-cleft construction is a mechanism used to focus, to make a contrast or to emphasize the element. The theories about the clefted element and the cleft clause have long been argued: some support the extrapositional account, such as Akmajian (1970) and Gundel (1977) while the other vote for the expletive account, such as Kiss (1998), Davidse (2000) and Lambrecht (2001).

The cleft construction in Mandarin Chinese is studied by many linguists, such as Teng (1979), Tang (1981), Lee (2005), among others; however, pseudo-cleft and reversed pseudo-cleft construction seems to be paid less attention to. In this thesis, I use Taiwan Southern Min (TSM) as my data, which is a dialect of Mandarin Chinese, to discuss the cleft, pseudo-cleft, reversed pseudo-cleft, and equational pseudo-cleft constructions. Following Lee's (2005) classification of cleft construction in Mandarin Chinese, the cleft construction in TSM contains the subject focus, adjunct focus, and predicate focus. As to the pseudo-cleft construction, only subject and object can be focused, but not adjunct. In the formation of the two constructions, there are three important elements- *si, ti,* and *e. Si* is a focus marker to mark the element behind it in cleft construction while it is a topic marker in pseudo-cleft and equational pseudo-cleft constructions; *ti* is a focus maker to mark the midpoint of the bound event; *e* is a non-perfect aspect marker in cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions, but a relative clause marker in equational pseudo-cleft construction. Table 1 is the summary of three elements.

Table 1

element	Construction		
	Cleft	Pseudo-cleft	Equational pseudo-cleft
si	focus marker	topic marker	
ti	focus marker		
e	non-perfect aspect marker		relative-clause marker

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Comparing the cleft construction with pseudo-cleft construction, I argue that pseudo-cleft is derived from the cleft construction rather the other way around in TSM.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section two is some literature review about two groups of researchers on cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions. Section three shows the data of cleft, pseudo-cleft, reversed pseudo-cleft and equational pseudo-cleft sentences in TSM, whereas section four contains the analysis of the elements and the derivations of the constructions. Then section five is the concluding remarks.

2. Literature Review

Collins (1991) has the following statistics in table 2 for the focus element in cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions. In cleft construction, subject and adjunct are frequently focused, in pseudo-cleft construction, object and subject are and in reversed pseudo-cleft construction, object and adjunct are. Compared the clefted element in the cleft and pseudo-cleft construction, there is a mismatch of derivation from cleft to pseudo-cleft or the other way around.

Table 2

Ranking	Cleft	Basic pseudo-cleft	Reversed pseudo-cleft
1	Subject (38.3%)	Object (37.3%)	Object (38.3%)
2	Adjunct (36.7%)	Subject (32.8%)	Adjunct (34.4%)
3	Object (6.8%)	Adjunct (5.8%)	Subject (14.2%)

2.1 Extrapositional accounts about *it*-cleft

This approach focuses on the copular nature of cleft constructions and treats the postponed cleft clause as a modifier to the cleft element. So this approach agrees that (2) is derived from (1).

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

Those who support such an idea include Akmajian (1970), Emons (1976), Gundel (1977), Wirth (1978) and so on.

2.2 Expletive account about *it*-cleft

This approach emphasizes that the cleft clause bears a semantic relation to the clefted constituent rather than to the cleft pronoun *it*, which is expletive or dummy. So this approach has the construction as in (3).

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

Those who support such an idea include Huddleston (1984), Heggie (1988), Kiss (1998), Davidse (2000) and Lambrecht (2001).

2.3 The cleft and pseudo-cleft construction in Mandarin Chinese

In Tang (1981), there are three kinds of cleft construction in Mandarin Chinese: cleft (4), cleft variant (5) and pseudo-cleft (6).

(4) Zgangsan *shi* qunian   biye   *de*   (cleft)
    Zhangsan   is   last yesr graduate   SFP
    'It was last year that Zhangsan graduated.'
(5) Zgangsan *shi* qunian   bi   *de*   ye (cleft variant)
    Zhangsan   is   last year   graduate   de
    'It was last year that Zhangsan graduated.'
(6) Zgangsan *shi* qunian   biye *de* ren (pseudo-cleft)

Zhangsan   is   last year   graduate   de   person
'Zhangsan is the one who graduated last year.'

There are two important components - *shi* and *de*. As to *shi*, he thinks it is a verb used to identify or to stress while *de* is a sentence final particle in cleft and cleft variant construction but a relative clause marker in pseudo-cleft construction. In cleft derivation, he proposes that predicate lowering or topicalization is applied. As to pseudo-cleft derivation, he proposes that the verb *shi* and the clefted element are moved one by one. Moreover, verb copying is used in pseudo-cleft construction.

In Lee's (2005) dissertation, she argues that the marker *shi* and *de* are focus markers and there are subject focus in (7), adjunct focus in (8) and predicate focus in (9) and (10) As to the marker *de*, *de* is necessary in stative predicate in (10) while needless in dynamic predicate in (9).

(7) *Shi*   Zhangsan   da   Lisi   (*de*)
    SHI   Zhangsan   beat   Lisi   DE
    'It was Zhangsan that beat Lisi.'
(8) Zhangsan   *shi*   zuotian   da   Lisi (*de*)
    Zhangsan   SHI   yesterday   beat   Lisi   DE
    'It was yesterday that Zhangsan beat Lisi.'
(9) Zhangsan *shi*   da –le   Lisi
    Zhangsan SHI   beat-Asp   Lisi
    'It is true that Zhangsan beat Lisi.'
(10) Zhangsan   *shi*   xihuan   Lisi   *de*
    Zhangsan   SHI   like   Lisi   DE
    'It is true that Zhangsan likes Lisi.'

The structure of cleft construction is illustrated in (11). The focus marker *shi* is located in the head of FP and the focused element is moved from the complement of F to the Spec, FP in LF. *De*, a focus marker, is adjoined to FP.
(11)

TopP
 |
   FP
    |
  FP   *de*
  |
focused element ᵢ   F'
                |
          F   IP
         shi   △
           ….tᵢ…
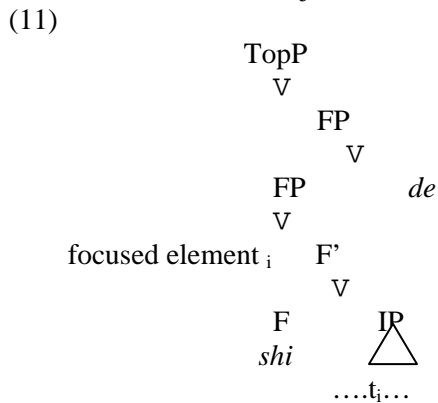
3. Cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions in Taiwan Southern Min
3.1.1 subject focus
The subject is the focus in the beginning of the sentence with an optional marker *si*, the marker *ti* introduces the predicate and the whole sentence ends with a marker *e* as the example (12) and (13) show.

(12) si   A-ming   ti   phah   A-ing   e
    si   A-ming   ti   hit   A-ing   e
    'It is A-ming that hits A-ing.'
(13) (si)   tsit   liap   ioha   ti   khoo   e

si   this   Cl   pill   ti   bitter   e
   'It is this pill that is bitter.'

3.1.2   adjunct focus

Besides subject focus, adjunct focus is also possible. The focus element contains the time adverbials (14), the place adverbials (15) and the adverbial phrases (16).

(14) A-ming   si   chang   ti   phah   A-ing   e
   A-ming   is   yesterday   ti   hit   A-ing   e
   'It was yesterday that A-ming hit A-ing.'
(15) A-ming   si   ti   pangkeng   ti/le[1]   phah   A-ing   e
   A-ming   was   prep   room   ti/le   hit   A-ing   e
   'It was in the room that A-ming hit A-ing.'
(16) tsit   siang ue   si   tshut-mng   ti   tshing   e
   This   pair   shoes   si   going out   ti   wear   e
   'It is going out that people wear the shoes.'

What needs more attention is that in adjunct focus in (16), the object *tsit   siang   ue* 'this pair of shoes' is the argument of the verb *tshing* 'wear' and should be located behind the verb. This is the difference from (14) and (15).

3.1.3   predicate focus

(17) ??A-ming   si   ti   phah   A-ing   e
   A-ming   si   ti   hit   A-ing   e
   'It is hitting A-ing that A-ming does.'
(18) ??A-ming   si   le   kai-i   A-ing   e
   A-ming   si   le   like   A-ing   e
   'It is liking A-ing that A-ming does.'
(19) tsit   to   tshai   si   ti   tsiah   thng-thau   e
   This   CL   dish   si   ti   eat   taste   e
   'It is tasting the taste that people eat the dish'

What differs (19) from (17) and (18) is that the subject or the topic *tsit to tshai* 'this dish' in (19) is the argument of the verb *tsiah* 'eat.' And *tsit to tshai* 'this dish' is the possessor of *thng-thau* 'taste.' Besides, what different from Lee's (2005) observation in Mandarin Chinese is that in predicate focus in TSM, the focus includes the VP or NP, but not truth proposition.

3.2   pseudo-cleft construction in TSM
Based on Tang (1981), identifying pseudo-cleft sentences in Mandarin Chinese, rather than attributing pseudo-cleft sentences, are pseudo-clefts, so the former sentences are my concern. My observation is that in pseudo-cleft construction, subject and object can be focused.

3.2.1   subject focus
(20)   ti   phah   A-ing   e   si   A-ming
   ti   hit   A-ing   e   is   A-ming
   'Who hit A-ing is A-ming.'
(21)   ti   khoo   e   si   tsit   liap   ioha
   ti   bitter   e   is   this   Cl   pill
   'What is bitter is this pill.'
(22) le   kai-i   A-ing   e   si   A-ming
   le   like   A-ing   e   is   A-ming

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[1] *Le* is a phonetic variant of *ti.* In 4.2, I will talk about this.

'Who likes A-ing is A-ming.'

(23) ti   tsiah   thng-thau   e   si   tsit   to   tshai
     ti   eat   taste   e   is   this CL   dish
     'What people eat the taste is the dish'

3.2.2   object focus

(24) A-ming   ti   koamsim   e   si   A-ing.
     A-ming   ti   care about   e   is   Aing
     'Who Aming cares about is Aing.'

(25) A-ming   le   kai-i   e   si   A-ing
     A-ming   le   like   e   is   A-ing
     'Who A-ming likes is A-ing.'

3.2.3   adjunct focus is impossible

(26)* A-ming   ti   phah   A-ing   e   si   chang
      A-ming   ti   hit   A-ing   e   is   yesterday
      'When A-ming hit A-ing was yesterday.'
(27)* tsit   siang   ue   ti   tshing   e   si   tshut-mng
      this   pair   shoe ti   wear   e   is   going out
      'When people wear the shoes is going out.'

3.3   Reversed pseudo-cleft construction in TSM
3.3.1 subject focus
(28) A-ming   si   ti   phah   A-ing   e
      A-ming   is   ti   hit   A-ing   e
       'A-ming is who hit A-ing.'
(29)* tsit   liap   ioha   si   ti   khoo   e
      this   Cl   pill   is   ti   bitter e
       'This pill is what is bitter.'
(30) A-ming   si   le   kai-i   A-ing   e
     A-ming   is   le   like   A-ing   e
     'A-ming is who likes A-ing.'
(31) tsit   to   tshai   si   ti   tsiah   thng-thau   e
     this   CL   dish   is   ti   eat   taste   e
     'The dish is what people eat the taste'

The examples in (28) to (31) are the same as the predicate focus in cleft constructions, but (29) is ungrammatical. So it seems that something must be different form the predicate focus in cleft construction.

3.3.2   object focus
(32) *A-ing   si   A-ming   ti   koamsim   e   .
      Aing   is   A-ming   ti   care about   e
      'Aing is who Aming cares about.'
(33) *A-ing   si   A-ming   le   kai-i   e
      A-ing   is   A-ming   le   like   e
      'A-ing is who A-ming likes.'

As the object focus in reversed pseudo-cleft construction, (32) and (33) are ungrammatical.

3.3.3 adjunct focus

(34) chang   si   A-ming   ti   phah   A-ing   e
     yesterday is   A-ming   ti   hit   A-ing   e
    'Yesterday was when A-ming hit A-ing.'
(35)* tshut-mng si   tsit siang ue   ti   tshing   e
     going out is   this pair shoe ti   wear   e
     'Going out is when people wear the shoes.'

Regarding to adjunct focus in (34) and (35), the former is not an adjunct focus sentence, but subject focus sentence; the latter is ungrammatical.

    To sum up, there is no reversed pseudo-cleft in TSM.

3.3.4 more about reversed pseudo-cleft construction

From the examples of reversed pseudo-cleft construction above, it seems that there is no such a construction in TSM. But when there is a noun following *e*, all the sentences become grammatical as the following examples show.

(36) A-ming   si   ti   phah A-ing   e   lang
     A-ming   is   ti   hit   A-ing   e   person
     'A-ming is the person who hit A-ing.'
(37) tsit liap ioha si   ti   khoo e   mihkia
     this Cl   pill is   ti   bitter e   thing
     'This pill is the thing that is bitter.'
(38) A-ming   si   le   kai-i A-ing   e   lang
     A-ming   is   le   like   A-ing   e   person
     'A-ming is the person who likes A-ing.'
(39) tsit to tshai   si   ti   tsiah   thng-thau e   mihkia
     this CL dish   is   ti   eat   taste   e   thing
     'The dish is the thing that people eat the taste'
(40) A-ing si   A-ming   ti   koamsim   e   lang
     Aing is   A-ming   ti   care about   e   person
     'Aing is the person who Aming cares about.'
(41) A-ing si   A-ming   le   kai-i   e   lang
     A-ing is   A-ming   le   like   e   person
     'A-ing is the person who A-ming likes.'
(42) chang   si   A-ming   ti   phah A-ing   e   sikan
     yesterday is A-ming   ti   hit   A-ing   e   time
     'Yesterday was the time when A-ming hit A-ing.'
(43) tshut-mng si   tsit siang ue   ti   tshing e   sikan
     going out is   this pair shoe ti   wear   e   time
     'Going out is the time when people wear the shoes.'

    So it is obvious that there is a difference in the component *e* in the reversed pseudo-cleft construction. Similar to the examples in (36) to (43), the pseudo-cleft sentences become grammatical when the noun appears. The examples are in (44) to (51). In the next section, I will analyze the component *e* and try to explain its function.

(44) ti   phah A-ing   e   lang   si   A-ming
     ti   hit   A-ing   e   person   is   A-ming
     'The one who hit A-ing is A-ming.'

(45) ti   khoo   e   mihkia   si   tsit   liap   ioha
     ti   bitter   e   thing   is   this   Cl   pill
       'The thing that is bitter is this pill.'
(46) le   kai-i   A-ing   e   lang   si   A-ming
     le   like   A-ing   e   person   is   A-ming
     'The onw who likes A-ing is A-ming.'
(47) ti   tsiah   thng-thau   e   mihkia   si   tsit   to   tshai
     ti   eat   taste   e   thing   is   this   CL   dish
     'The thing that people eat the taste is the dish'
(48) A-ming   ti   koamsim   e   lang   si   A-ing.
     A-ming   ti   care about   e   person   is   Aing
       'Who Aming cares about is Aing.'
(49) A-ming   le   kai-i   e   lang   si   A-ing
     A-ming   le   like   e   person   is   A-ing
     'The one who A-ming likes is A-ing.'
(50) A-ming   ti   phah   A-ing   e   sikan   si   chang
     A-ming   ti   hit   A-ing   e   time   is   yesterday
     'The time when A-ming hit A-ing was yesterday.'
(51) tsit   siang   ue   ti   tshing   e   sikan   si   tshut-mng
     this   pair   shoe   ti   wear   e   time   is   going out
       'The time when people wear the shoes is going out.'

Den Dikken, Meinnuger and Wilder (2000) argue that there is a difference between the pseudo-cleft and reversed pseudo-cleft constructions. The former (wh-clause +be +XP) is composed of a question wh-clause and a full finite IP, which is reduced then by ellipsis while the latter (XP + be + wh-clause) forms the subject of a copular sentence whose predicate is the wh-clause. Moreover, there are eight properties in the pseudo-cleft construction, including NPI connectivity, irreversibility, the ban on Subject-Aux inversion, the ban on overt and covert extraction of and from the XP, the ban on embedding under ECM and raising verbs, the restriction on tense/modality/aspect, the restrictions on adverbial modification and the restriction on gapping. I will follow their analysis and try to see if there is such a difference in TSM.

From the data in 3.3.2 to 3.3.3, there is subject and object focus in pseudo-cleft sentences, but no reversed pseudo-cleft sentences. These sentences in pseudo-cleft are irreversible as shown in the reversed pseudo-cleft and not allowed the extraction or gapping. But TSM is not restricted to the embedding ECM or raising verb, the tense/aspect/modality, or adverbial modification. So it seems that there is no such a clear cut between pseudo-cleft and reversed pseudo-cleft in TSM. As to the data in 3.3.4, there is the same result as the outcome above, except that the property of irreversibility. The examples in 3.3.4 are all irreversible.

In next section, I will firstly discuss the three important elements in focus structure and then I will discuss the data in 3.3.4.

4. My analysis
4.1 *si*
The *si* is distributed in the following examples.

(52) gua   si   ngoolekuan.
      I   am   Wu lekuan
        'I am Lekuan, Wu.'
(53) cit   pun   cu   si   sin   e   la.
     this   CL.   book   is   new   e   SFP

'This book is new.'

(54) (si) tsit   liap   ioha   ti   khoo   e.
     si   this   Cl   pill   ti   bitter   e
     'It is this pill that is bitter.'
(55) A-ming   si   chang   (ti)   phah   A-ing   (e).
     A-ming   is   yesterday   (ti)   hit   A-ing   (e)
     'It was yesterday that A-ming hit A-ing.'
(56) tsit   to   tshai   si   ti   tsiah   thng-thau   e.
     This   CL   dish   si   ti   eat   taste   e
     'It is tasting the taste that people eat the dish'

   Si parallels to Mandarin Chinese *shi* in that both have the predicational and emphatic function, but there is no existential usage. In predicaitonal usage, *si* is a topic marker to describe the characteristics of the subject while in emphatic usage, it is a focus marker. So the two *shi* is occupied in two different positions. When the focused element is in the initial position, the salient position in the sentence, the *si* marker becomes optional as example (13) shows. The omission of the marker *si* can be explained by the concept of figure and ground in cognitive linguistics. The beginning position of the sentence is the most salient part and should be put the most important information-the figure. Therefore, the focus marker *si* becomes optional in subject focus. Moreover, in the examples of cleft construction, it seems acceptable when *si* is omitted, but the focus meaning in the sentences disappears. So I will still regard *si* as a necessary component in cleft construction in TSM.

4.2 *ti*
According to Hong (1995), *ti* is a focus or emphasis marker in cleft construction and pseudo-cleft construction. I make a comparison between the two markers- *ti* in TSM and *zai* in Mandarin Chinese. In Mandarin Chinese, Huang (1988) claims that *zai* is one of the marker of bounded event with focus on the midpoint of the event. So I follow Huang's (1988) claim that *ti* is a viewpoint aspect marker to mark the midpoint of the bound event.

4.3 *e*
Comparing with another sentence final particle *a*, I argue that *e* is a viewpoint aspectual marker to express non-perfect. So in TSM, the final *e* in the cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions is a non-perfect marker, which is located in the head Aspect. I will apply this in the derivations in the next section. The final *e* is similar to Japanese *no,* which is located pronominal or pronominal. According to Kizu (2005), the *no* in cleft construction is projected to CP rather than NP, which is quite like to my analysis except the TP projection. But when there is a noun behind *e* as the examples in 3.3.4, it is an equational sentence whether it is reversed or not. It is because non-perfect marker *e* is changed to the relative clause marker *e* since the relative clause *e* occurs quite frequently. Besides, the expletive accounts consider the clause to be variable. So it seems possible that the variable can have some change.
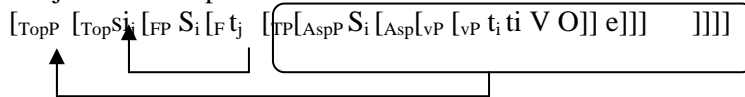
4.4 Cleft construction and pseudo-cleft constructions
The arguments are realized in vP and *e*, a non-perfect marker, is projected to AspectP. The subject then is moved to Spec AspP. Since TSM, like Mandarin Chinese, has no morphological marker on the tense, the time adverbial is used to show the tense. So the whole construction is projected to TP. In the cleft construction, *si* is a focus marker and following Rizzi (1997), the focused element is moved to spec FP.
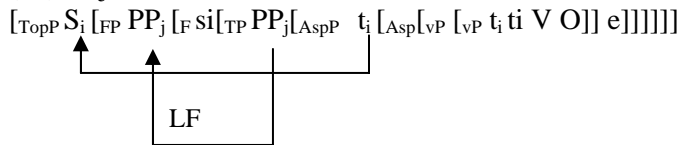(57) Subject focus in cleft
$[_{FP} S_i [_F si [_{TP} [_{AspP} t_i [_{Asp} [_{vP} [_{vP} t_i ti V O]] e]]]]]$

      LF

Subject focus in pseudo-cleft

[$_{TopP}$ [$_{Top}$S$_i$ [$_{FP}$ S$_i$ [$_F$ t$_j$ [$_{TP}$[$_{AspP}$ S$_i$ [$_{Asp}$[$_{vP}$ [$_{vP}$ t$_i$ ti V O]] e]]]   ]]]]
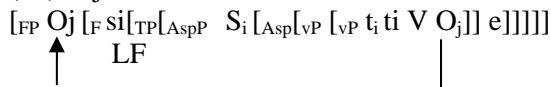
As to the adjunct focus, in TP projection, I follow Di (2006), who claims that the tempo-point NP sits in the spec TP. Then focus *si* is projected to FP with the focused element *chang* 'yesterday' to spe FP in LF. As to the subject, it moves upward to Spec TopP to function as a topic.

(58) Adjunct focus in cleft

[$_{TopP}$ S$_i$ [$_{FP}$ PP$_j$ [$_F$ si[$_{TP}$ PP$_j$[$_{AspP}$ t$_i$ [$_{Asp}$[$_{vP}$ [$_{vP}$ t$_i$ ti V O]] e]]]]]]]
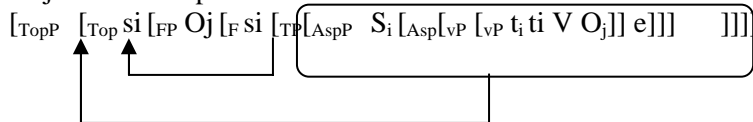
LF

In 3.1, there is no object focus in cleft sentence in TSM, but there is object focus in English. In TSM or Mandarin Chinese, below FP is TP or IP. If what follows *si* is the object, then the other elements must move to Spec TopP as adjunct focus in cleft, but those are not a constituent. So there is no object focus in cleft construction, but in LF the object is moved to Spec FP.

(59) object focus in cleft

[$_{FP}$ Oj [$_F$ si[$_{TP}$[$_{AspP}$ S$_i$ [$_{Asp}$[$_{vP}$ [$_{vP}$ t$_i$ ti V O$_j$]] e]]]]]]

LF

Object focus in pseudo-cleft

[$_{TopP}$ [$_{Top}$ si [$_{FP}$ Oj [$_F$ si [$_{TP}$[$_{AspP}$ S$_i$ [$_{Asp}$[$_{vP}$ [$_{vP}$ t$_i$ ti V O$_j$]] e]]]   ]]]

If the derivation is from pseudo-cleft to cleft, all the cleft sentences are impossible to be derived.

5. Conclusion

In the thesis, I mainly follow the expletive account and Lee's analysis on cleft construction to analyze the focus construction in Taiwan Southern Min. I talk about four kinds of focus structures in TSM, including cleft, pseudo-cleft, reversed pseudo-cleft and equational pseudo-cleft constructions. Three elements in focus construction are discussed: *si, ti* and *e*. *Si* is a focus marker in cleft, but a topic marker in pseudo-cleft and equational pseudo-cleft; *ti* is a viewpoint aspect marker to mark the midpoint of the bound event; *e* is a non-perfect marker in cleft and pseudo-cleft, but when *si* becomes a topic marker, *e* can change into a relative clause marker in equational pseudo-cleft construction. Then I claim that syntactically pseudo-cleft construction is derived from cleft construction rather than the other way around. Then the equational pseudo-cleft is derived. Last, I apply the gestalt of figure and ground to explain the cleft and pseudo-cleft construction. The cleft construction is figure-before-ground construction whereas pseudo-cleft is ground-before-figure construction. It is the information structure that decides the place of figure and ground. To sum up, I claim that syntactically the pseudo-cleft construction is derived from cleft construction because of information structure.

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