RUSSIAN PREDICATE CLEFTS: TENSIONS BETWEEN SEMANTICS AND PRAGMATICS*

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Abstract

Russian predicate cleft constructions have the surprising property of being associated with adversative clauses of the opposite polarity. I argue that clefts are associated with adversative clauses because they have the semantics of S-Topics in Büring's (1997, 2000) sense of the term. It is shown that the polarity of the adversative clause is obligatorily opposed to that of the cleft because the use of a cleft gives rise to a relevance-based pragmatic scale. The ordering principle according to which these scales are organized is relevance to the question-under-discussion.

1 Introduction

VP-fronting constructions have been attested in a wide variety of languages, including Haitian Creole, Yiddish, Swedish, Norwegian, Catalan, Brazilian Portuguese, Hebrew and Russian. Russian predicate clefts are constructions where the infinitival verb is presposed and its tensed copy is pronounced in situ. The present paper is devoted to exploring the semantics, pragmatics and discourse function of Russian predicate clefts (RPCs). The main puzzle that this paper addresses is the association of RPCs with adversative clauses of the opposite polarity. It is argued that the association of clefts with adversative clauses is due to the fact that clefts are S-Topic constructions in Büring's (1997) sense of the term S-Topic[1]. S-Topics have a special discourse strategy associated with them; this strategy consists of implicating the relevance of a set of questions that are sisters to the question dominating the sentence containing the S-Topic. It is shown that clefts are associated with clauses of the opposite polarity because, by using a cleft, the speaker makes salient a relevance-based scale based on relevance to the question-under-discussion. In the concessive clause, the lower value on the scale is affirmed; in the adversative clause, it is denied that a higher value on the scale holds, hence the crossed polarity pattern.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 1 is the introduction. In section 2, contexts in which clefts are used and their association with adversative clauses are discussed. Section 3 is concerned with the intonational properties of clefts. In section 4, Büring's theory of S-Topics is introduced and a case is made for analyzing RPCs as S-Topic constructions. A compositional analysis of RPCs is provided. In section 5, it is argued that the association of clefts with adversative clauses of the opposite polarity is due to the fact that clefts have discourse function of implicating the relevance of a particular question that is sister to the question dominating the predicate cleft and the overt or implicit adversative clause provides an answer to this question. It is shown that the opposite polarity pattern is due to the fact that the use of a cleft gives rise to a pragmatic scale. In Section 6, it is argued that the use of an

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[1] It needs to be noted here that Büring (1997) uses the term S-Topics (or sentential topics) and Büring (2000) uses the term "contrastive topics" in reference to the same phenomenon.

RPC gives rise to a conventional implicature that some proposition Q that is stronger on the relevance-based scale than the proposition P given rise to by the cleft does not hold. It is also shown that when the adversative clause is not overt the speaker conveys its content through a particularized conversational implicature. In section 7, the analysis is summarized.

2 The Data

The concessive clause in (1b), 'as far as reading it, he reads it', is an example of an RPC.

(1) a. Is he reading the book?
b. Čitat' -to eë on čitaet, no ne ponimaet.
read$_{INF}$ TO it$_{FEM.ACC}$ he reads but not understands
'As far as reading it, he reads it, but he does not understand it.'

The speaker of (1b) uses the RPC construction in order to indicate that some other topic[2] than the one addressed by the predicate cleft is more relevant in the given context. The more relevant topic of whether or not the referent of 'he' understands what he is reading is addressed in the adversative clause.

(2) a. Is she keeping in touch?
b. Ona pišet, no zvonit' ne zvonit.
she writes but call$_{INF}$ not calls
'She writes but, as far as calling, she does not call.'

In (2b), the cleft occurs in the adversative clause; the more relevant topic is her not calling. The topic addressed by the RPC is always contrasted with some other topic; the speaker uses the RPC to indicate which topic is the most relevant one in the given discourse situation.

In the default case, the cleft is associated with an overt adversative clause. As will be argued below, in certain contexts, the content of the adversative clause may be conveyed through an implicature. Concerning the role of the topic particle *to*, it needs to be noted that its presence is never obligatory; *to* may encliticize to the preposed verb to mark it as discourse-old in the sense of having been evoked in the prior discourse, as in (1b).

2.1 Contexts of Use

RPCs, being instances of preposing constructions, cannot be uttered out of the blue. The predicate cleft in (3) below cannot be uttered in response to a question like, "what's new?"

(3) Begat'-to ona begala, a v magazin ne xodila.
run$_{INF}$ TO she ran but in store$_{MASC.ACC}$ not went
'As far as running, she ran, but she didn't go to the store.'

(3) can be uttered in response to either of the following questions.

(4) Did she go to the store ?
(5) Did she run?
(6) Has she done everything she planned to?

The verb that is preposed in the predicate cleft may but need not be given.

(3) is a felicitous answer to the question in (6) if both interlocutors know that running and going to the store are on her "to do" list. In Ward and Birner's (2001) terms, (3) may be

[2] The term "topic" is not used in the technical sense in section 2.

felicitously uttered in response to either of the questions in (4-6) if 'running' and 'going to the store' are in poset relation as alternate members of the inferred poset "her 'to do' list ."

Next, consider the dialogue in (7) in a context where swimming is not something the referent of 'she' is wont to do.

(7) a. What did she do today?
b. # Plavat' ona plavala, no v magazin ne xodila.
swim$_{INF}$ she swam but in store $_{MASC.ACC}$ not went
'As far as swimming, she swam but she didn't go to the store.'

Preposing the verb for "to swim" is infelicitous in this context because swimming is not a member of the inferred poset "activities she is likely to engage in." If the predicate cleft construction is not used, the response is felicitous, as (7c) demonstrates.

c. Ona plavala, no v magazin ne xodila.
she swam but in store $_{MASC.ACC}$ not went
'She went swimming but she did not go to the store.'

2.2 The association of RPCs with adversative clauses

The RPC is either associated with an overt adversative clause or the content of the adversative clause is conveyed through an implicature.

(8) Speaker A:
a. What did she do today?
Speaker B:
b. # Guljat' ona guljala.
walk$_{INF}$ she walked
'As far as going for a walk, she went for a walk.'

Even if A and B know that going for a walk is on the list of activities she is likely to engage in, B's response is infelicitous. In contrast to VP-preposing constructions of the topicalization variety, the predicate cleft in (8b) can not be used to affirm an open proposition, "she did / did not go for a walk."[3] The RPC has discourse function of indicating that some other topic is more relevant in the given context. An RPC may be used without an adversative clause *if the interlocutors share enough information for the hearer to be able to compute the speaker's implicature that otherwise would have been overtly expressed in the adversative clause.*

Whenever a predicate cleft occurs on its own, there is a strong implicature to the effect that there is an issue that the speaker views as more relevant than the one addressed in the monoclausal predicate cleft construction.

(9) a. Did they move to their new office?
b. Pereexat'-to oni pereexali.
move$_{INF}$ TO they moved
'As far as moving, they moved.'

Possible Implicature: but they haven't renovated it.

The implicature that the predicate cleft gives rise to is a conversational implicature, as will be discussed in more detail below.

[3] One of the discourse functions of English VP-preposing constructions is affirming a speaker's belief in an open proposition that is salient in the previous discourse (Ward, 1990).
(i) Mary said she would go to Boston, and go to Boston she did.

3 Intonation Facts

In this section, it will be demonstrated that a particular intonational contour is associated with RPCs, which will be instrumental in accounting for the association of RPCs with adversative clauses.

(10) a. Who bought the tomatoes?
b. # Kupit' pomidory ona kupila, no salat ne sdelala.
buy$_{INF}$ tomatoes$_{ACC}$ she bought but salad not made$_{PERF}$
'She bought the tomatoes but she hasn't made a salad.'

In (10b), the NP 'she' receives focus because of its status as new information. The only felicitous pronunciation of (10b) is the one where the main pitch accent falls on 'bought', as in (11b).

(11) a. Did she buy tomatoes?
b. Kupit' pomidory ona kupila, no salat ne sdelala.
buy$_{INF}$ tomatoes$_{ACC}$ she bought but salad not make$_{PERF}$
'She bought the tomatoes but she hasn't made a salad.'

Next, consider the intonation pattern associated with RPCs.

(12) a. Does he know her address?
b. Znat' on ego ne znaet, no poiskat' možet.
know$_{INF}$ he it$_{MASC.ACC}$ not knows but search$_{PERF.INF}$ can
'He doesn't know it but he can look for it.'

Figure 1 below shows that in (12b) the preposed verb 'know' receives a LH* accent; the in-situ tensed verb 'know' also receives a LH* accent, which is the main pitch accent of the sentence. The verb 'can' in the adversative clause receives a L* accent.

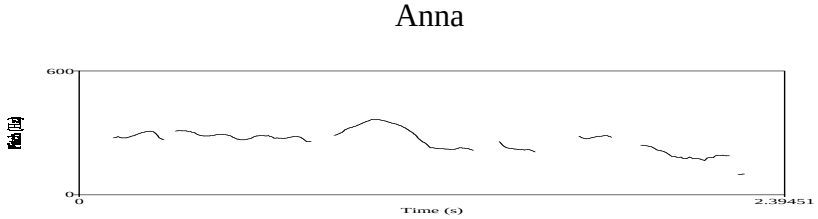


Figure 1. RPC

A variety of RPCs was recorded, and this particular intonation pattern obtained in all of them. It was found that there is a special tune associated with RPCs: a LH* accent on the fronted infinitival verb, followed by a high plateau, followed by a LH* accent on the in-situ tensed verb, followed by a high plateau, followed by a L* accent on the focused phrase in the adversative clause.

It needs to be noted here that the LH* accent on the preposed verb is due to the fact that a preposed phrase always receives a LH* accent in Russian. A variety of constructions where a phrase was preposed were recorded and the preposed phrase was invariably marked by a LH* accent. However, the LH* accent on the in situ tensed verb is unexpected. Incidentally, contrastive topics, or S-topics in Büring's terms, are marked by a LH* accent in Russian as well. In (13b) below, the NP *Anja* functions as an S-topic, as will become clear from the discussion of S-topics in the next section. The NP *Anja* is marked by a LH* accent.

(13) a: What did the women wear ?
b: Anja byla v dublënke.
Anja was in coat
'Anja wore a coat.'

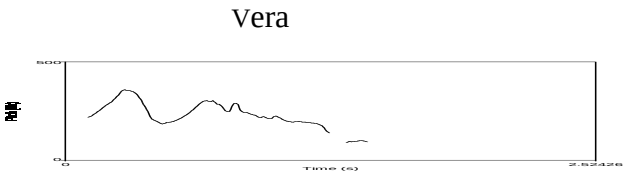


Figure 2. S-topic

The intonation contour associated with the RPC and the association of RPCs with adversative clauses will be accounted for by demonstrating that these properties follow from the fact that RPCs are S-Topic constructions in Büring's (1997) sense of the term.

4 Büring's Theory of S-Topics and the S-Topic Discourse Strategy

Büring (1997) introduces the notion of S-Topics to account for the coherence of discourses where one of the interlocutors provides a partial or even a seemingly unrelated answer to his addressee's question.

(14) Speaker A:
a. What book would Fritz buy?
Speaker B:
b. Well, I would buy *The Hotel New Hampshire*. (Büring 1997:66).
L*H

The L*H accent on the "I" in B's response is obligatory in order for it to be a felicitous response to A's question. On the face of it, the Focus value of the answer does not match the meaning of the question. While the question in (14) denotes a set of propositions of the type, "Fritz would buy Y," the focus value of the answer is, "I would buy Y." The dialogue in (14) is coherent because B's response is appropriate with respect to the Discourse-topic that is defined as a set of propositions that are informative with respect to the Common Ground. Propositions of the type, "X would buy Y," are informative with respect to the Common Ground. In, "X would buy Y," the topic as well as the focus introduces a set of alternatives. The Topic value of (14b) can be represented as a set of questions that obligatorily includes the original question, "What book would Fritz buy?" Questions in the topic value are formed by replacing the S-Topic with an alternative and questioning the focus of the original sentence containing the S-Topic, as in (15).

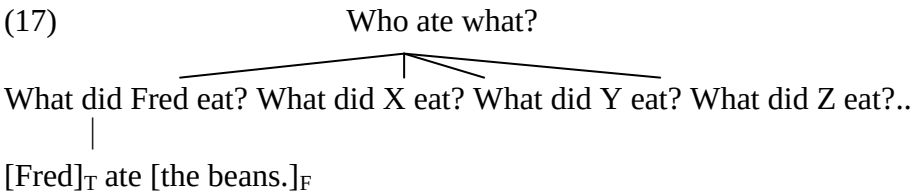
(15) {What book would I buy?, What book would Fritz buy?, What book would Mary buy?…} (Büring 1997:66-67).

In order for the utterance of a sentence containing an S-Topic to be felicitous, one of the answers to one of the questions in the topic value needs to be under discussion. In (14), the question, "What book would Fritz buy?" is under discussion prior to the utterance of the sentence containing the S-topic. This ensures that the sentence containing the S-Topic is informative with respect to the Common Ground. The use of an S-Topic is felicitous only if at least one of the alternatives to it is under discussion.

The use of an S-Topic indicates the following discourse strategy. In the discourse tree (d-tree) framework used in Büring (2000), the use of a sentence containing an S-Topic implicates the existence of a set of questions that are sisters to the question immediately dominating the sentence containing the S-topic.

(16) a. What did Fred eat?
b. $[\text{Fred}]_T$ ate the $[\text{beans.}]_F$
L*H

(17)



The use of the sentence in (16b) indicates a discourse strategy in the sense of implicating the relevance of questions that are sisters to the question immediately dominating the sentence, "Fred ate the beans." The generalized conversational implicature associated with the use of (16b) is that other people ate other foods (Büring 2000:4-7).

4.1 RPCs as S-Topic constructions

In this section, it will be argued that RPCs are S-Topic constructions in Büring's (1997, 2000) sense of the term. The following conditions need to be fulfilled in order for a construction to be classified as an S-Topic construction.

1) Phonologically, an S-Topic is obligatorily marked by a topic accent, and this accent must be different from the focus accent. As discussed in section 2, in the RPC, the in-situ tensed verb is obligatorily marked by a LH* accent that is distinct from the focus accent.

2) The use of a sentence containing an S-Topic is associated with a strategy of implicating that questions in the topic value of the S-Topic sentence are relevant. This is precisely the strategy that the use of an RPC indicates.

(18) Emu xotelos' blesnut' i obratitsja k dame na eë rodnom jazyke. Čitat'-to po-bolgarski on čital – kirillica ! – i daže pri ètom koe-čto ponimal, no ustnaja živaja reč' nikak ne poddavalas' ponimaniu: taratorjat.

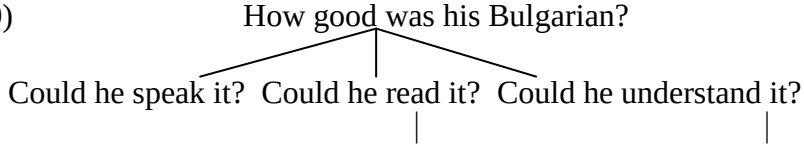
'He wanted to impress the lady by speaking to her in her native language. As far as reading Bulgarian, he could read it – they used the Cyrillic alphabet! -- and he even understood some of what he was reading, but the spoken language he couldn't understand – they were speaking too fast'. (Mamedov, Milkin, The Sea Stories. 2003).

In (18), the underlined predicate cleft cannot occur without being followed by an adversative clause, as (19) illustrates.

(19) Emu xotelos' blesnut' i obratitsja k dame na eë rodnom jazyke. # Čitat'-to po-bolgarski on čital – kirillica ! – i daže pri ètom koe-čto ponimal.

The use of the RPC in (18) implicates that a question different from the one addressed by the RPC is the most relevant one in the given discourse, namely, the protagonist's command of spoken Bulgarian. As the discourse tree in (20) illustrates, this question is addressed in the adversative clause and is sister to the question immediately dominating the predicate cleft.

(20) How good was his Bulgarian?



as far as reading Bulgarian, he could read it... but the spoken language he couldn't understand...

3) In order for the use of a sentence containing an S-Topic to be felicitous, one of the questions in the topic value of the S-Topic sentence needs to be under discussion. The use of an S-Topic is possible only if at least one of the alternatives to it is under discussion. In (18), the question, "Could he speak Bulgarian?" is under discussion prior to the utterance of the cleft because in the discourse preceding the cleft it is mentioned that the protagonist wanted to speak to the lady in Bulgarian.

4.2 RPCs as S-Topic constructions: a formal account

First, it needs to be determined what phrase in the RPC can be analyzed as an S-topic. Both the preposed infinitival verb and its in situ tensed copy are marked by the LH* topic accent. As demonstrated, topicalized phrases are marked by LH* in Russian. If the preposed verb alone were construed as an S-topic, it would be puzzling why its in situ tensed copy obligatorily bears the LH* topic accent as well. The in situ tensed verb has the status of being given, thus its being marked with the LH* topic accent must convey some additional meaning. This meaning is that of being an S-topic; the tensed verb in situ will be analyzed as an S-topic in Büring's sense of the term.

In Büring's framework, the S-topic introduces a set of alternatives. In the case of RPCs, the verb in situ is an S-Topic that introduces a set of alternatives. Crucially, the adversative clause associated with the cleft is a member of this set. This is due to the fact that the use of a predicate cleft is associated with a strategy of implicating that a set of questions that are sisters to the question immediately dominating the cleft is relevant; the adversative clause is an answer to one of these questions.

Consider how this would work on the following constructed example.

(21) Čitat' Maša čitaet, no ne ponimaet.
read$_{INF}$ Masha read but not understand
'As far as reading, Masha reads but she does not understand what she is reading.'

(22) As far as reading, Masha [reads]$_T$ but she does not [understand]$_F$

The focus on the verb "understand" introduces a set of alternatives. The focus value of (22) is given in (23).

(23) {read Masha read but not understand, read Masha read but not write...}

The Topic value of (22) is a set of such sets with alternatives to the S-Topic. Consider Büring's interpretation rule (50) in the Appendix for deriving the topic value of a sentence in which one phrase is topic-marked and another one is focus-marked. By rule (50), the topic value of (22) is as in (24):

(24) {{read Masha read but not understand, read Masha read but not write...}, {sing Masha sing but not understand, sing Masha sing but not write...}}

Consider Büring's (1997) interpretation rule for deriving the topic value of a sentence given in (51) in the Appendix. By the rule in (51), the topic value of (22) is as follows.

$[[22]]^t$ = λP. ∃H [H∈ ALT (read') & H(Masha) & P = λp. ∃Q [Q∈ ALT (understand') & H∈ ALT (understand') & p = ¬Q (Masha)]]

4.3 The compositional analysis of RPCs

Abels' (2001) syntactic analysis of RPCs will be adopted here. Abels (2001) argues for the movement analyses of RPCs, with both copies of the verb being phonetically realized.

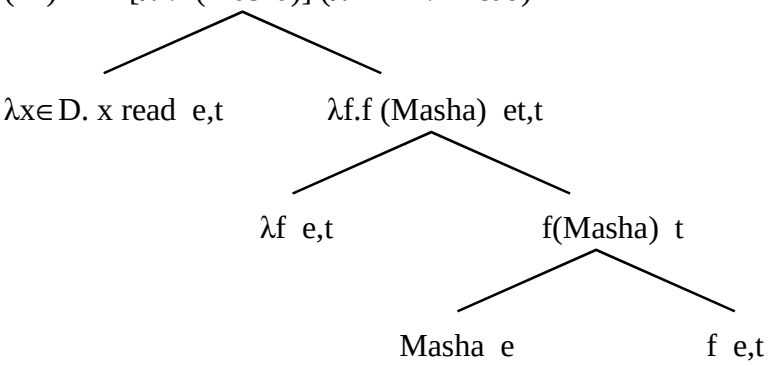
(25) $[_{CP}\ldots\ [_{XP}\ [_{VP}\ldots V_{inf}\ldots]\ldots[$-*to*...$[_{IP}\ldots V_{fin}\ldots]]]$ (Abels, 2001, p. 10).

Next, consider a constructed RPC in (26) and its semantic derivation in (27) below.

(26) Čitat' Maša čitaet.
$read_{INF}$ Masha reads
'As far as reading, Masha reads.'

In my semantic analysis, I am ignoring the difference between the infinitival verb and the tensed verb. In (27) below, first, the function f that is a trace of the moved VP combines with the NP "Masha." Then lambda abstraction over f takes place. After that, the infinitival verb is combined with the product of the lambda abstraction, which results in the RPC meaning on top of the tree.

(27) [λf.f (Masha)] (λx ∈ D. x read)



The truth conditions of the sentence in (26) are as in (28).

(28) [λf.f (Masha)] (λx ∈ D. x read) = 1 iff Masha reads.

In the tree in (27), I provided a compositional analysis of the RPC in which the verb "read" is used intransitively. It needs to be noted here that my analysis would have to be elaborated to account for RPCs with transitive verbs in which the direct object may either be preposed as part of the preposed VP or, alternatively, is scrambled out of the VP, with the VP being subsequently preposed.

5 Why RPCs are Associated with Adversative Clauses

As demonstrated, RPCs have discourse function of S-Topics -- the use of an RPC indicates a strategy that consists of implicating the relevance of questions in the topic value of the cleft. In addition, the speaker of a cleft indicates the sub-strategy that consists of indicating which specific question among the questions in the topic value of the cleft is relevant in the given discourse. As previously argued, the adversative clause can be implicated rather than overt if the following condition holds.

(29) *The interlocutors share enough information for the hearer to be able to compute the speaker's implicature that otherwise would have been overtly expressed in the adversative clause.*

When contextual information is not sufficient for the addressee to infer from the context the question whose relevance is implicated by the use of an RPC, the speaker uses an overt adversative clause that provides an answer to this question. When the addressee is able to infer the question and the answer to it from the context, the content of the adversative clause providing the answer may be expressed through a conversational implicature.

5.1 The crossed polarity pattern and pragmatic scales

Whenever an RPC is followed by an overt adversative clause, the polarity of the adversative clause is the opposite of that of the cleft (e.g., (1), (2), (18)).

The following constructed examples demonstrate that violating the crossed polarity pattern requirement leads to deviance.

(30) a. Did she buy tomatoes?
b. * Kupit' pomidory ona kupila, a ogurtsy u neë byli.
buy$_{INF}$ tomatoes$_{ACC}$ she bought but cucumbers$_{ACC}$ at her were
'She bought the tomatoes but the cucumbers she already had.'
c. Kupit' pomidory ona kupila, a ogurtsy ne kupila.
buy$_{INF}$ tomatoes$_{ACC}$ she bought but cucumbers$_{ACC}$ not bought
'She bought the tomatoes but the cucumbers she didn't buy.'

The contrast between (30b) and (30c) demonstrates that the reason why the RPC in (30b) is deviant is that the crossed polarity pattern requirement is violated.

Next, consider an RPC where both the clause containing the cleft and the adversative clause have negative polarity.

(31) a. Has she answered the email?
b. * Otvetit' ona ne otvetila, no u neë ne bylo vremeni.
answer$_{INF}$ she not answered but at her not was time
'She didn't answer the email but she didn't have time.'

If a predicate cleft is not followed by an overt adversative clause, it gives rise to an implicature of the opposite polarity, as (32) illustrates.

(32) Context: A and B know that Mary is not sure if she should write to John or not.
Speaker A:
a. Did Mary write John a letter?
Speaker B:
b. Napisat'-to pis'mo ona napisala.
write$_{INF}$ TO letter she wrote
'As far as writing the letter, she wrote it.'

Implicature: the speaker does not know if Mary sent the letter.

In accounting for the crossed polarity pattern, I would like to adopt Lee's (2002) insight that the use of CT (or S-topic, in Büring's terms) gives rise to a scale. According to Lee (2002), the use of a CT predicate gives rise to a Horn scale; event descriptions are ordered on the scale based on degree of accessibility to the ultimate goal in the relevant series of events.

However, the notion of accessibility to the ultimate goal in the relevant series of events is too narrow to account for the types of scales RPCs may give rise to. While in Korean predicate clefts, only stage-level predicates may be used, in RPCs, individual-level predicates may be used as well. Moreover, RPCs give rise to scales that are not entailment-based. A constructed example in (33) illustrates that the use of an RPC gives rise to a pragmatic scale.

(33) Context: A and B are trying to decide if Miss Clark or Mary would be a better French tutor for their son. A knows nothing about either of the two candidates, and B knows that Miss Clark has a degree in French but doesn't like French and that Mary loves French but is incompetent.

Speaker A:
a. Would Miss Clark be a good tutor?
Speaker B:
b. Znat' francuskij ona znaet, no ne lubit.
know$_{INF}$ French she know but not love
'As far as knowing French, she knows it, but she doesn't like it.'

The pragmatic scale relevant for (33) is as in (34).

(34) <love French, know French>

The question under discussion (QUD)[4] that the RPC in (33b) addresses is, "Would Miss Clark be a good tutor?" If speaker B were to follow up his utterance with, "I think that she would make a good tutor," he would sound contradictory. A natural continuation of (33b) is, "So I don't think she would make a good tutor." This is evidence to the effect that B's response conveys a negative answer to the QUD – "no, Miss Clark wouldn't be a good tutor." The concessive and adversative clauses of B's reply in (33) constitute two parts of his answer to the QUD. The concessive clause containing the cleft provides an inconclusive answer to the QUD. It is the adversative clause that implicates the negative answer to the QUD that speaker B wishes to convey. These intuitions about the exchange in (33) are reflected in the scale in (34). "Love French" is stronger than "know French" on the pragmatic scale based on *relevance to the QUD*.

Next, consider the dialogue in (35) that takes place in the same context as the one in (33).

(35) Speaker A:
a. Would Mary be a good tutor?
Speaker B:
b. Lubit' francuskij ona lubit, no počti ne znaet.
love $_{INF}$ French she love but almost not knows
'As far as liking French, she likes it, but she hardly knows it.'

As in (33), in (35), B's response may not be felicitously followed up with, "I think that she would make a good tutor." B's response conveys a negative answer to the QUD, "Would Mary be a good tutor?" The exchange in (35) gives rise to the following scale.

(36) <know French, love French>

"Know French" is ranked higher than "love French" because the concessive clause in which "love French" is affirmed does not answer the QUD conclusively. In other words, "know French" is ranked higher because its denial provides a conclusive answer to the QUD that speaker B wishes to convey.

The following dialogue illustrates that pragmatic scales that RPCs give rise to are based on relevance as it is perceived by the speaker of the cleft, not necessarily as perceived by both interlocutors.

Assume that the dialogue below takes place in the same context as the one in (33).

[4] In the pragmatic literature, the term QUD is often used in reference to different phenomena. In the present paper, I am using the term QUD in reference to the either explicit or implicit question that is the most salient one during a given stage in the conversational exchange. Büring (2000) uses the term "question-under-discussion" in reference to the same phenomenon.

(37) Speaker A:
a. Does Mary like French ?
Speaker B:
b. # Znat' francuskij ona ne znaet, no lubit.
know$_{INF}$ French she not know but love
'As far as knowing French, she doesn't know it, but she loves it.'

(37b') shows that if an RPC construction is not used, this response is fine.

b': Ona francuskij ne znaet, no lubit.
she French not know but love
'She doesn't know French but she loves it.'

The dialogue in (37) illustrates that the adversative clause in the RPC cannot contain an answer to an overt immediate QUD; only the clause containing the cleft can answer an immediate QUD. Thus B's response in (37) would have been felicitous as an answer to a question, "Does Mary know French?" As it stands, the exchange in (37) is infelicitous because, as it was previously argued, discourse function of RPCs is indicating that a different question (or topic) than the one addressed in the concessive clause is the more relevant one. The more relevant topic is addressed in the overt or implicated adversative clause. In (37), speaker B's use of the cleft in response to A's question suggests that he considers some topic other than Mary's liking French more relevant in the given context. Speaker B appears to contradict himself when he ends up addressing the subject of Mary's loving French in the adversative clause, hence the infelicity of (37b). In a nutshell, (37) illustrates that the speaker of the RPC is the one indicating to the addressee which topic he considers more relevant. Thus the pragmatic scale that the use of an RPC gives rise to is based on relevance to the QUD *as perceived by the* speaker *of the cleft.*

As far as the crossed polarity pattern between the cleft and the adversative clause is concerned, it needs to be noted that this requirement is pragmatic rather than semantic, as will be illustrated below. Consider the RPC in (38), where both clauses have positive polarity.

(38) Prijti ona prišla, no pozdno.
come$_{INF.}$ she came but late
'She came over, but she came over late.'

In (38), both the cleft and the adversative clause have positive polarity. The adversative clause contains an elided VP "came"; "came late" is an alternative to "came," which is the S-topic. The overt adversative clause "but late" introduces a new question in the topic value, namely, "Was she on time ?" and provides a negative answer to this question. The relevant pragmatic scale is given in (39):

(39) <come over on time, come over>

The adversative clause gives rise to the implicature, "she did not come over on time." Thus it is implicated that the higher value on the scale does not hold. In (38), the polarity of the relevant scalar implicature is opposed to that of the concessive clause; the scalar implicature rather than the overt adversative clause satisfies the crossed polarity pattern.

To summarize, RPCs are associated with clauses of the opposite polarity for the following reason. The use of an RPC introduces a pragmatic scale, and the concessive clause affirms a lower value on the scale, while the adversative clause denies that a higher value holds. This observation is formalized in (40).

(40) *The proposition given rise to by the RPC containing an S-topic predicate P is contrasted with an either overt or implicit adversative proposition "'but' ¬ Q" for*

positive clefts and "'but' Q" for negative clefts, with predicate Q being stronger than P on the relevance-based pragmatic scale that the speaker's use of the RPC gives rise to.

It needs to be noted here that an RPC may either be followed by an adversative clause or, in some cases, it may be preceded by a concessive clause and may occur in the adversative clause, as in (41).

(41) Ona francuskij znaet, no lubit' ne lubit.
she French know but $love_{INF}$ not loves
'She knows French but, as far as loving it, she doesn't love it.'

If an RPC occurs in the adversative clause, it has the same discourse function as an RPC occurring in the concessive clause. An RPC occurring in the adversative clause indicates the sub-strategy associated with RPCs, i.e., it indicates which specific question in the topic value of the RPC is the most relevant one in the given discourse. By using the predicate cleft in the adversative clause, the speaker indicates that the question dominating the cleft is the most relevant one in the given discourse. The answer to this question is contrasted with the answer to the question dominating the concessive clause preceding the cleft. The use of (41) gives rise to the scale where "loving French" is ranked higher than "knowing French." In light of the fact that an RPC can occur in the adversative clause, the condition in (40) needs to be modified to the one in (42).

(42) *The RPC containing an S-topic predicate may occur either in the concessive or adversative clause. The concessive proposition given rise to by the clause containing predicate P or ¬P is contrasted with the adversative propositions "'but' ¬ Q" or "'but' Q," respectively, with predicate Q being stronger than P on the relevance-based pragmatic scale that the speaker's use of the RPC gives rise to.*

6 Conventional and Conversational Implicatures Generated by the RPC

By the condition in (42), the utterance of the RPC gives rise to the implicature that some predicate Q that is stronger than predicate P employed in the cleft does not hold. This is the *conventional* implicature associated with RPCs. From this it follows that the predicate whose truth is affirmed or denied in the RPC cannot be the maximal value on the scale the RPC gives rise to. Consider a case where using in the cleft the strongest item on the relevant scale leads to infelicity.

(43) SpeakerA:
a. How good is his Bulgarian ?
Speaker B:
b. # Znat' on ego v soveršenstve znaet.
$know_{INF}$ he it in perfection know
'As far as knowing Bulgarian, he knows it perfectly.'

Speaker C
c. Znat' on ego znaet.
$know_{INF}$ he it know
'As far as knowing Bulgarian, he knows it.'

A's question and B's infelicitous response in (43b) give rise to the following scale that the two interlocutors share.

(44) < know Bulgarian perfectly, know Bulgarian moderately well, know Bulgarian badly>

B's response in (43) would have been felicitous without the modifier "perfectly." The modifier "perfectly" cannot be used because the RPC in (43b) ends up affirming the highest value on the scale in (44) -- "know Bulgarian perfectly."

In contrast, C's response in (43c) is felicitous and may implicate that the referent of 'he' knows Bulgarian but does not like it, in which case C's utterance of the cleft would give rise to the scale in (45).

(45) <like Bulgarian, know Bulgarian>

When an RPC is associated with an overt adversative clause, the clause containing the RPC affirms proposition P and gives rise to the conventional implicature that some proposition Q that is higher on the relevant scale does not hold. This implicature is non-cancelable.

(46) Given that P is the content of the RPC, the RPC generates the following *conventional* implicature:

"'¬ Q' for some Q that is stronger than P on the relevance-based pragmatic scale."

When the speaker utters the adversative clause, the hearer learns the exact content of Q. Thus the utterance of (43c) generates the conventional implicature that some higher value than "know Bulgarian" does not hold and the conversational implicature, "he does not like Bulgarian." If the speaker of (43c) were not sure that his addressee would be able to compute this implicature, he would have followed up the cleft with an overt adversative clause, "but he does not like Bulgarian." Because the speaker of the cleft is often unsure that the hearer can infer the content of the scale that his use of a given RPC generates, the speaker often utters rather than merely implicates the adversative clause.

The speaker of a cleft may convey the content of the adversative clause through a *particularized conversational implicature* (PCI), given that his addressee has sufficient information to compute its content. (47) illustrates how this implicature is computed.

(47) Context: A and B know that Mary is thinking about sending John a letter but is unsure if she should send it.
Speaker A:
a. Did Mary write John a letter?
Speaker B:
b. Napisat'-to pis'mo ona napisala.
write$_{INF}$ TO letter she write
'As far as writing the letter, she wrote it.'

Implicature: the speaker does not know if Mary sent the letter.

(48) Computing the Implicature:

While providing a direct answer to A's question, B employed a marked construction. By Levinson's (2000) M Heuristic, "what is said in an abnormal way isn't normal" (Levinson, p. 38). B would not have used a marked construction unless he intended to convey some additional meaning, this meaning being that, apart from the writing of the letter, some of Mary's actions are relevant in the given discourse. By Levinson's (2000) Q-principle, if B were in a position to make a more informative statement about actions that Mary performed, he would have done so. By Grice's (1975) maxim of Relevance, since B did not make such a statement, yet implicated the relevance of Mary's actions, he must have intended to convey the meaning that he is unsure if Mary performed some other relevant action(s). The interlocutors share the knowledge that sending the letter is a relevant action. B's utterance of (47b) gives rise to the ignorance implicature that B is unsure if Mary sent the letter.

In (47), initially, the QUD is, “Did Mary write John a letter?” By using an RPC, speaker B shifts the QUD to a broader QUD, “Did Mary contact John?” B’s use of the RPC in (47) and the implicature it generates give rise to the following pragmatic scale.

(49) <send the letter, write the letter>

The cleft asserts the weaker value on this scale; however, it does not provide a satisfactory answer to the broader QUD. Whether or not the stronger value on the scale -- “send the letter” -- actually holds is more relevant to the broader QUD. If it does not hold, a negative answer to the broader QUD would be conveyed and vice versa. If speaker A believed that B knew for a fact whether or not Mary sent the letter, he would have taken B’s utterance to convey the PCI, “Mary did not send the letter.”

The conversational implicature the cleft gives rise to is particularized rather than generalized because it is entirely context-dependent. Thus, if (47b) were uttered in a context where A and B shared the knowledge that the postal service is unreliable, the utterance of (47b) would have generated the implicature, “the speaker does not know if the letter will be delivered.”

7 Conclusion

The main puzzle that was addressed here was the association of clefts with adversative clauses of the opposite polarity. It was argued that the association of clefts with adversative clauses is due to the fact that clefts are S-Topic constructions. The speaker of the cleft implicates the relevance of a set questions in the topic value of the cleft and indicates which specific question in this set is relevant in the given discourse. Typically, a cleft is associated with an overt adversative clause that addresses the more relevant question. Alternatively, the content of the adversative clause may be implicated if the interlocutors share enough information for the hearer to be able to compute the speaker’s conversational implicature that otherwise would have been overtly expressed in the adversative clause.

As far as the opposed polarity pattern is concerned, it was argued that it arises because the use of an RPC gives rise to a relevance-based scale. The concessive clause affirms a lower value on this scale and the higher value is denied in the adversative clause. The use of an RPC conventionally implicates that some proposition that is stronger on the relevance-based scale than the one given rise to by the cleft does not hold.

While a substantial amount of work has been done in neo-Gricean pragmatics on exploring the maxims of Quantity and Quality, the maxim of Relevance is the least studied and the least understood of Grice’s maxims. (Relevance theory is based on the notion of relevance that is radically different from the maxim that was originally proposed by Grice). In the light of some observations concerning the generation of implicatures that were made in this paper, I would like to briefly suggest a way of formalizing the maxim of Relevance within the question under discussion framework (Roberts, 1996) [5]. The maxim of Relevance may be conceived of as demanding relevance to the QUD. The mechanism behind generating a Relevance implicature is that a speaker flouts the maxim of Relevance because his utterance does not address the QUD, or addresses it indirectly or partially. However, the implicature that the speaker conveys through producing this utterance does address the QUD directly; thus the speaker obeys the maxim of Relevance at the level of the implicature that the utterance gives rise to.

[5] It needs to be noted here that the idea to make a connection between Relevance and the question under discussion is implicit in van Rooj (2003), who proposes to rank answers to a salient question in terms of informativity and relevance to the question.

Appendix

Topic semantic value:

(50) $[[\text{HANS}_T \text{ IS COMING}_F]]^t = \{\{Ch, Lh\}, \{Cf, Lf\}, \{Cm, Lm\}\}$

(L = is leaving)

The topic value of (50) may be represented as follows using λ-notation:

(51) $[[50]]^t = \lambda P.\ \exists x\ [x \in \text{ALT (hans)} \ \&\ P = \lambda p.\ \exists Q\ [Q \in \text{ALT (is-coming)} \ \&\ p=Q(x)]]$

(based on Büring 1997, pp. 78-79).

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