CLEFT SENTENCES IN TAMIL[*]

Jespersen was the first grammarian to use the term 'cleft' for a type of sentence in English. A cleft sentence is a special construction which gives both thematic and focal prominence to a particular element of the clause; it is so-called because it divides a single clause into two separate sections, each with its own verb.[1] Most cleft sentence statements begin with the pronoun *it* followed by the verb *be* which in turn is followed by the element on which the focus falls.

There is another type of construction in English called 'pseudo-cleft'. This term is relatively new and seems to have arisen within the transformational-generative tradition, its formation emphasizing the formal and semantic kinship of the construction concerned to the cleft sentence.[2] The semantic kinship to cleft sentences leads to a semi-formal requirement that pseudo-cleft sentences should have a bipartite form, looking like a broken-up form of a simple sentence, with a 'focal' constituent which in some sentences is being emphasized, and a remainder. The formal kinship to cleft sentences requires that the sentence is a copular sentence having a subject that consists of a clause introduced by a Wh-item, usually what, this subject clause constituting the remainder of the simple sentence, and a portion which follows the copula and constitutes the focal constituent, the constituent which is being emphasized.

---

1. Quirk, Randolph and Greenbaum, Sidney (1979) *A University Grammar of English*, Nineth impression, (London, Longman Group Limited), pp.414-17.
2. Higgins, F.R. (1979) *The Pseudo-cleft Construction in English*, (New York & London, Garland Publishing, Inc.)

Even in, English, the domain of application of the terms 'cleft' and 'pseudo-cleft' is not very clear and there is much confusion and overlapping, causing differences of opinion even now among the linguists as F.R. Higgins (1979) points out. The present paper will not try to distinguish between cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions in Tamil. That task will be left to a later study. The author will use the term 'cleft' to cover both types of sentences.

The Tamil grammatical tradition has not recognised the existence of this type of construction. In fact, the attention of scholars has been drawn to the existence of cleft sentences in Tamil by three Western grammarians during the past dozen years. James M. Lindholm (1971), the pioneer contributor in the field, has illustrated the existence of cleft sentences in Tamil and has argued for the recognition and acceptance of 'cleft' constructions in Tamil grammar.[3] His constribution seems to be comprehensive but the author of this paper has one reservation. This reservation involves the addition of emphasizers like $t\bar{a}n$ or $-\bar{e}$ or Wh-question word to any constituent of a sentence to be emphasized. In addition to this, the formal nominalization of the finite verb, signifying the nominalization of the whole sequence of elements that are left behind, is said to be automatically making the sentence a cleft construction. Sentences of this type exist in Tamil. But the focussed element here is not moved out, signifying cleft.

Harold Schiffman (1979) refers to the existence of cleft sentences in Tamil, as in English.[4] According to him, the nominalisation of finite verbs, signifying, of course, the nominalization of the sequence of elements that are left behind, is sufficient to make simple declaratory sentences into cleft sentences. He does not postulate even the addition of emphasizers or interrogative

3. Lindholm, James M. (1971) Cleft Sentences in Tamil and Malayalam, *Proceedings of the First All-India Conference of Dravidian Linguistics*, (ed, V.I. Subramaniam and Elias Valentine, Trivandrum, Dravidian Linguistics Association).

4. Schiffman Harold (1979) *A Grammar of Spoken Tamil*, (Madras, The Christian Literature Society), pp. 94-95.

markers, as Lindholm did. Examples of the cited pattern exist in Tamil. The author of this paper has his reservation here as there does not seem to be any focus or movement transformations in his examples. R.E. Asher (1982) has given a somewhat fuller outline of cleft sentences in colloquial Tamil.[5] This paper aims to explore the possibility of forming slightly different types of cleft constructions in Tamil. The author hopes that this paper will serve as a working paper, drawing attention of more scholars to this topic.

Cleft sentences are quite common in informal Tamil speech. Written records seem to have studiously avoided cleft sentences as traditional Tamil grammar has not recognised their existence. These sentences occur frequently in rhetorical style in platform speech. Cleft sentences make their appearance in modern creative literature, especially in dialogues. Mass media in Tamil make use of cleft sentences. So the examples, cited in the study in this paper, are from modern standard Tamil.

Asher (1982) postulates the existence of three kinds of cleft sentences in Tamil. Two of them are somewhat similar in that both of them involve two basic changes in simple declaratory sentences. The constituent that needs focus is shifted to the post-verbal position. This constituent is one which in the speech context the speaker is either affirming, denying, questioning or supplying as a new piece of information. This constituent becomes the semantic predicate. The rest of the sentence becomes the new subject. The syntactic predicate changes its finite verb character to a nominal form. This change is indicated by dropping the distinctive Person-Number-Gender marker and substituting neuter singular PNG marker. Lindholm has shown that the resultant nominal, though similar in form to the participial noun and verbal noun, is quite distinct from them functionally. In addition to simple declaratory sentences, other types of sentences may also produce cleft formations. This paper will try to see how far this is possible.

---

5. Asher, R.E. (1982) *Tamil*, (Amsterdam, North-Holland Lingua Descriptive Studies, Volume 7).

I. Cleft Formation (1)

The two changes mentioned in the previous paragraph enable the formation of one type of cleft sentences in Tamil. Most constituents of a simple declaratory sentence can be focussed and postposed after the syntactic predicate. As in English, it is not possible to focus on the finite verb. But as in English, this restriction can be circumvented. In Tamil, the finite verb has to be used in nominalized form and a nominalization based on cey 'do' has to be substituted for it in the other part of the sentence. Such cleft formation will be considered under cleft formation (2) for semantic reasons. It is also not possible to focus on adjectives or possessives in Tamil. Constraints on such movement transformation rules will be illustrated in the study here.

A formula of some surface structure features of each source sentence will be given as the heading in each case. This will illustrate to some extent the focussing of different constituents in each source sentence and also the wide use of cleft formation in sentences with slightly different features. The special mention of these details have no other significance. Simple declaratory sentences and equivalent cleft sentences will be taken up first.

(1) S. (Mas.Sing.) -- Adv. -- V. present.
    irāman kaṭumaiyāka ulaikkirān.
        'Raman works hard'.
    Kaṭumaiyāka ulaikkiratu irāman
        'It is Raman who works hard'.
    irāman ulaikkiratu kaṭumaiyaka ttān.
        'It is with hardness that Raman works'.

(2) S. (Fem.Sing.) -- O.direct -- V. past.
    kannaki kōvalanai manantāḷ
        'Kannaki married Kovalan'.
    Kannaki manantatu kōvalanaiyē.
        'It was Kovalan whom Kannaki married'.
    Kōvalanai manantatu kannaki maṭṭumē.
        'It was Kannaki alone who married Kovalan'.

(3) S. (Epi.Pl.) -- O.indirect -- V.past.
    ciṟuvarkaḷ pāṭacālaikku vantārkaḷ.
        'Children came to school'.

ciṟuvarkaḷ vantatu pāṭacālaikku.
'It was to school that children came'.
pāṭacālaikku vantatu ciṟuvarkaḷ.
'It was children who came to school'.

(4) S.(Neu.Pl.) -- Loc.N. -- V. present.
kuraṅkukaḷ maraṅkaḷil tāvukiṉṟana.
'Monkeys jump on the trees'.
maraṅkaḷil tāvukiṉṟatu kuraṅkukaḷē.
'It is monkeys that jump on the trees'.
kuraṅkukaḷ tāvukiṉṟatu maraṅkaḷilēyē.
'It is on trees only that monkeys jump'.

(5) S.(Neu.Sing.) -- O. direct -- V. future.
pūṉai pāl kuṭikkum.
'The cat will drink milk'.
pāl kuṭippatu pūṉai.
'It is the cat that will drink milk'.
pūṉai kuṭippatu pāl maṭṭumē.
'It is the milk alone that the cat will
                                    drink'.

Some observations will be made about the cleft senten-
ces so far illustrated. There seems to be some restriction
about moving the nominalized form of the finite verb to the
rightward end of the cleft sentence. Constituents like the
direct object, the indirect object, the adverb and the lo-
cative noun phrase also have to be moved out along with the
verb. Emphasizers like *tāṉ, maṭṭum* and *-ē* occur in cleft
sentences. As these occur in the surface structure of non-
cleft simple declaratory sentences also, their function is
a little difficult to determine. Cleft sentences can fun-
ction without these emphasizers. The clitic *-ē* seems to be
of contrastive significance. emphasizing one out of many
possibilities. The clitic tāṉ, which form also functions
as a reflexive pronoun, can be translated as 'only' in many
places. The form *maṭṭum* is of restrictive significance and
it can be translated as 'alone' in many places. As there
are two homonymous clitics in *-ē*, it is difficult to decide
in a few places its particular significance without refe-
rence to the context. Whether the clitic -ē can double and
occur as -ēyē is another problem. There are forms like
iṅkēyē and maraṅkaḷilēyē which can be split up as *iṅku*,
'here' + ēyē and maraiṅkaḷil, 'on trees' + ēyē. But in
modern usage, *iṅkē* has replaced *iṅku* and *maraiṅkaḷilē* has

replaced *marainkaḷil*. So it is possible to argue that there is only one emphatic $-\bar{e}$ in one constituent.

The form *maṭṭum* can occur alone and give emphatic significance meaning 'alone'. maṭṭum occurs with $-\bar{e}$ and *tān* and in a few cases as *maṭṭumē tān*. It is not possible to differentiate among forms like *avan maṭṭum, avan maṭṭumē* and *avaṇ maṭṭumē tāṇ* except to say that further emphasis seems to be intended.

The clitic *tāṇ* is the most common emphasizer. Probably because of the influence of the reflexive pronoun plural form, *kuraṅkukaḷ tān* (4) and *ciṟuvarkaḷ tām* (3) occur in cleft sentences. There is considerable overlap in usage between $-\bar{e}$ and *tāṇ* and it is difficult to predict which will occur in most circumstances. As the homonymous clitic $-\bar{e}$ has interrogative significance, spoken Tamil seems to prefer *tāṇ* in normal emphatic position. Many cleft sentences can occur with *tān* following the postposed focussed constituent. Such cleft sentences can also occur without *tāṇ*. So the clitic *tāṇ* can be held to be adding emphasis to the focus.

Another possible interpretation for the frequent occurrence of *tān* in cleft sentences could be a matter of stylistics. A cleft sentence, uttered alone, usually ends with an emphasizer, especially *tān*. But when such a sentence is followed by other sentences, this *tāṇ* occurs rarely. The clitics *tāṇ* and $-\bar{e}$ can occur together. When $-\bar{e}$ is followed by *tān* as in *avanē tān*, it should be considered as stronger emphasis. But when $-\bar{e}$ follows *tāṇ* as in *keṭṭāl tāṇē*, 'if only (you) listened', it is more of interrogative than of emphatic significance.

Cleft formation (1) follows the same pattern as so far described. How this cleft formation functions when other slightly different constituents come up in sentences will be illustrated below:-

    (6) S.(First Pers.Sing.) -- Locative Phrase --
                                    V.present

        nān pirittāniyāvil paṭikkirēn.
          'I study in Britain'.
        nān paṭikkiṟatu pirittāniyāvil.
          'It is in Britain I am studying'.
        nān paṭippatu pirittāniyāvil.

'It is in Britain I am studying'.
pirittāniyavil paṭikkiṟatu / paṭippatu nānē
'It is I who am studying in Britain'.

A comment is here needed regarding the occurance of
two forms *paṭikkiṟatu* and *paṭippatu* as interchangeable
substitutes for the present finite verbs. The form *paṭik-
kiṟatu* is the one that properly belongs to the present
tense. But this occurs usually in formal speech alone.
The form *paṭippatu,* which is usually identified with the
future, is really present-future in significane and it is
the preferred form as a substitute for the present finite
verb in informal speech.

(7) S. (Second Pers.Sing.) -- O.direct -- V.past.
nī avaṉai aṭittāy.
'You hit him'.
avaṉai aṭittatu nī.
'It was you who hit him'.
nī aṭittatu avaṉai,
'It was he whom you hit'.

(8) S.(Attribut.N.+ Prop.N.) -- Dative phrase -
V. past aspect.
elicapet makarāṇi ilaṅkai vantiruntār.
'Queen Elizabeth had come to Sri Lanka'.
ilaṅkai vantiruntatu elicapet makārāṇi.
'It was Queen Elizabeth who has come to
Sri Lanka.
elicapet makārāṇi vantiruntatu ilaṅkaikkē.
'It was to Sri Lanka that Queen Elizabeth
came'.
ilaṅkai vantirunta makārāṇi elicapet.*
'The Queen who came to Sri Lanka was
Elizabeth'.

The last two sentences here need comment. The first
of these differs from those above in that the dative phrase
ilankai can only occur with the case marker when it is fo-
cussed. In the preceding examples in (8), the case marker
is optional. The last sentence is somewhat peculair in
that a different process seems to be involved. The proper
name, a part of the subject, is focussed here. The finite
verb becomes the past adjective participle. The attribu-
tive noun *makārāṇi,* together with the rest of the sentence

becomes a noun clause. The noun clause becomes the sub-
ject and elicapet becomes the semantic predicate. Relati-
visation, rather than cleft formation is involved here.

> (9) S. -- numeral -- O.direct -- V.future reflexive.
>   kantan āru kaṭṭurai elutikkoḷvān.
>   'Kantan will be writing six essays by himself'.
>   kantan elutikkoḷḷum kaṭṭurai āru.*
>   'Essays which are written by Kantan are six'.

The derived sentence here reflects the same process
as noticed in the last sentence of (8). The focussed ele-
ment here is the numeral, qualifying the direct object.

> (10) S. -- O.direct -- V. modal.
>   aruḷ puttakattai vācikka vēṇṭum.
>   'Arul should read the book'.
>   aruḷ vācikka vēṇṭiyatu puttakattaiyē.
>   'It is the book that Arul should read'.
>   puttakattai vācikka vēṇṭiyatu aruḷē.
>   'It is Arul who should read the book'.

The presence of the modal auxiliary in the unfocussed
source sentence is no barrier to clefting.

> (11) S. -- O.direct (Adj.+N.) -- V.
>   piriyai alakāna pū piṭuṅkiṇāḷ.
>   'Piriyai plucked a beautiful flower'.
>   piriyai piṭuṅkiya pū alakānatu.*
>   'The flower plucked by Piriyai was beautiful'.

In Tamil, it is not possible to focus on the adjective in
its attributive form. So alakāna cannot come at the end.
But it can occur as alakānatu in its predicative form.
Some sort of focalization, but not cleft formation, is in-
volved here.

> (12) S. -- O.direct (Adj.+N.) -- V.
>   avan civappu kkoṭi ērrinān.
>   'He hoisted the red flag'.
>   avan ērriya koṭi civappu.*
>   'The flag which he hoisted was red'.

An adjective, attributive in nature, but nominal in
form like civappu 'red/redness' can be focussed without

change of form.   This transformation is relativization
rather than cleft formation.

(13) S.(Possess.Pronoun + N.) -- V.passive.
     avanutaiya panam tirutappattatu.
        'His money was stolen'.
     tirutappattatu avanutaiya panam.
        'It was his money that was stolen'.
     tirutapatta panam avanutaiyatu.*
        'The money that was stolen was his'.

    Like (11) when the attributive adjective alakāna has to
become the predicate adjective as alakānatu to be focussed,
here too the possessive case form avanutaiya has to become
avanutaiyatu to serve as the semantic predicate.   This too
falls outside of cleft formation.

(14) Adv.Clause -- S.(Instrumental case) -- V.future
                                              modal.
     atai natatti mutikka ennāl iyalum.
        'It will be possible for me to accomplish
                                    its performance'.
     ennāl iyaluvatu atai natatti mutikka ttān.
        'It is accomplishing its performance that I
                                    am able to'.
     atai natatti mutikka iyaluvatu ennāl mattumē.
        'It is only by myself that this performance
                                    can be accomplished'.
     ennāl natatti mutikka iyaluvatu ataittān.
        'It is just that that I can accomplish the
                                    performance of'.

(15) S.(Polite Sing.) -- Adv. of time -- Adv. of
                                    Place -- V.modal.
     amaiccar nālaikku inkē varakkūtum.
        'The minister may come here tomorrow'.
     amaiccar nālaikku varakkūtiyatu inkēyē.
        'It is just here that the minister may come'.
     amaiccar inkē varakkūtiyatu nālaikku ttān.
        'It is only tomorrow that the minister may
                                    come here'.
     nālaikku inkē varakkūtiyatu amaiccar.
        'It is the minister who may come here
                                    tomorrow'.

The modal kūṭum is nominalized as *kūṭiyatu*. Both
kūṭuvatu and kūṭukiṟatu, the other possible forms, are not
in use as modal auxiliaries.

(16) S. -- Purposive Phrase -- V.
    nāṉ makaḷukkāka vāṅkiṉēṉ.
      'I bought for my daughter'.
    nāṉ vāṅkiyatu makaḷukkāka.
      'It is for my daughter that I bought'.

(17) S. -- Locative Phrase -- V.
    puttakam mēcaiyiṉmēl kiṭantatu.
      'The book lay on the table'.
    puttakam kiṭantatu mēcaiyiṉmēl.
      'It was on top of the table that the book
                              lay'.

(18) S. -- Instrumental Phrase -- V.
    avaṉ katti koṇṭu veṭṭiṉāṉ.
      'He cut with a knife'.
    avaṉ veṭṭiyatu katti koṇṭu.
      'It was with the knife that he cut'.

(19) S. -- Locative Phrase -- V.
    cavāṉ intirā kānti pakkam cērntār.
      'Chavan joined Indira Gandhi's side'.
    cavāṉ cērntatu intirā kāntipakkam.
      'It was on Indira Gandhi's side that Chavan
               .   joined'.

(20) S. -- Adverb Phrase (Equative) -- V.
    kānti kaṭavuḷai ppōla ppōṟrappaṭukirār.
      'Gandhi is venerated as a deity'.
    kānti pōṟrappaṭuvatu kaṭavuḷai ppōla.
      'It is as a deity that Gandhi is venerated'.

(21) S.(Attribut.N.+N.) -- O.direct -- V.
    avaḷ aḻaku avaṉai kkavarntatu.
      'Her beauty attracted him'.
    avaṉai kkavarntatu avaḷ aḻaku.
      'It is her beauty that attracted him'.
    avaṉai kkavarnta aḻaku avaḷatu/avaḷuṭaiyatu.[*]
      'The beauty that attracted him was that of
                                  her'.

In this example, the constituent _aval_ cannot be moved to the focus position without modification. In genitive or possessive case relationship, the case marker is optional in Tamil. But in movement transformation, the possessive noun needs the predicate form. This too cannot be considered cleft formation.

    (22) S.(Noun Phrase) -- Adv. -- V. negative.
          pāratiyin perumai camakālattil uṇarappaṭavillai.
          Bharati's greatness was not realised contem-
                              poraneously'.
          camakālattil uṇarappatāṭatu pāratiyin perumai.
          'It was Bharati's greatness that was not
                     realised contemporaneously'.
          camakālattil uṇarappaṭāta perumai pāratiyinatu.*
          'The greatness that was not realised contem-
                    poraneously was that of Bharati'.

When the negative verb in _-illai_ is nominalized, the element _-illai_ disappears and the negative element gets included in the nominalized form of the adjective participle.

It does not seem necessary to confine cleft formation to simple declaratory sentences only. Some examples where entire clauses are focussed in cleft sentences follow:-

    (23) S. -- Adv. Clause -- V.
          avan tan perrōrai kkaṇṭapōtu makilntān.
          'He was happy when he saw his parents'.
          avan makilntatu tan perrōrai kkaṇṭopōtu.
          'It was when he saw his parents that he was
                              happy'.

    (24) Adv. Clause -- S. -- V.
          aracan irakka avan makaḷ araciyānāḷ.
          'When the king died, his daughter became
                              queen'.
          avan makaḷ araciyanatu aracan irakkattān.*
          ?aracan makaḷ araciyānatu avan irakkattān.
          aracan makaḷ araciyānatu aracan irakkattān.*
          'It was when the king died that the princess
                           became queen'.

As a pronoun can occur only after its antecedent there is difficulty in moving the adverbial clause here. The pronominalization rule makes the first transformation unacceptable and the second transformation questionable. The last sentence reflects proper pronominalization. Cleft formation is not involved here.

(25) S. -- Adv.Clause -- V.
    nāṭu aracaṅkam māriyatarku ppin munneriyatu.
      'The country progressed after the government
                            changed'.
    nāṭu munneriyatu aracaṅkam māriyatarku ppin.
      'It was after the government changed that
                 the country progressed'.

(26) S.-- Adv. Clause -- O. -- V.
    avan maruntu cāppiṭṭu uṭampu kuṇamānān.
      'He took medicine and recovered his health'.
    avan uṭampu kuṇamānatu maruntu cāppiṭṭu ttān.
      'It was only by taking medicine that he
               recovered his health'.

(27) S. -- Purposive Clause -- O.Indirect -- V.
    nān en perrōrai ppārppatarkāka ppulōli pōven.
      'I usually go to Puloly to see my parents'.
    nān pulōli pōvatu en perrōrai ppārppatarkāka.
      'It is to see my parents that I usually go
                to Puloly'.

The forms pōven, pōvatu, etc., serve to express habitual present also.

(28) Causal clause -- S.--O.indirect -- V.
    avan unakku utaviyatanāl, nān avanukku
                      utavukiren.
    'I am helping him because he helped you'.
    nān avanukku utavuvatu avan unakku utaviyatanāl
      'It is because he helped you, that I am
               helping him'.

(29) S. -- Causal clause -- V.
    avan tinamum matu aruntuvatanāl nōyāḷiyānān.
      'He has become ill as he takes liquor daily'.
    avan nōyāḷiyānatu tinamum matu aruntuvatanāl.
      'It was because he took liquor daily that
               he became ill'.

It is not possible to focus on comparative, conditional and concessive clauses. Even though movement transformations as in cleft type constructions are possible, the focussed elements do not seem to carry focus.

    (30) S.--Comparative Clause -- V.
        inta vīṭu anta vīṭṭilum periyatu.
          'This house is bigger than that house'.
        inta vīṭu periyatu anta vīṭṭilum.

    (31) S. -- Conditional Clause -- V.
        avan pariṭcai eḻutiṉāl citti eytuvāṉ.
          'He will pass if he sits for the examination'.
        avan citti eytuvatu pariṭcai eḻutiṉāl.*

    (32) S. -- Concessive Clause -- V.
        avan pariṭcai eḻutiṉālum citti eytamāṭṭāṉ.
          'He cannot pass even if he sits for the
                              examination'.
        avan citti eytamāṭṭātatu pariṭcai eḻutiṉālum.*

    (33) Concessive Clause -- S. -- V.
        pariṭcai eḻutiṉālum eḻutāviṭṭālum avan nilai
                                      tinuntātu.
          'His situation will not improve whether he
                sits for the examination or not'.
        avan nilai tiruntātu pariṭcai eḻutiṉālum
                          eḻutāviṭṭālum.*

    (34) Universal Clause -- S. -- V.
        yār enna connālum avan varuvāṉ.
          'He will come whoever may say what'.
        avan varuvatu yār enna connalum.*

It seems that interrogative sentences are amenable to cleft formation. The cleft sentences can only have the questioned element in the underlying sentence focussed. As all question words in Tamil are connected to clitic -*e*, the E. Question-word in Tamil is almost equivalent to Wh-Question-word in English.

    (35) S.-- O.direct -- V.
        nīya ivanai aṭittāy?
          'Was it you who hit him?'
        ivanai aṭittatu nī tāṉa?
          'Was it you who hit him?'

(36) S.(E.Question-word) -- O.indirect -- O.direct
                                              -- V.

   yār unakku itanai cconnār?
      'Who told you this?'
   unakku itanai cconnatu yār?
      'Who was it who told you this?'

(37) S.--O.direct (E.Question-word)--infinitive--V.
   nī yārai ppārkka ppōkirāy?
      'Whom are you going to see?'
   nī pārkka ppōvatu yārai?
      'Whom are you going to see?'

(38) S.--O.direct (E.Question-word)--V.
   avaḷ enna ceykirāḷ?
      'What is she doing?'
   avaḷ ceykiratu enna?
      'What is it, she is doing?'

   The focussed element may appear in the favourite sur-
face position of the subject, while the remainder of the
sentence may, once it has been nominalized, appear in the
surface position generally occupied by the predicate.

II. Cleft Formation (2)

   The second type of cleft formation in Tamil introduces
some more elements into cleft formation (1). Between the
nominalized subject and the focussed element which serves
as predicate, an E.Question-word (similar to Wh.Question-
word in English) appropriate to the element focussed is
introduced, followed by *enrāl*, the conditional form of the
quotative particle *enru*. This form has some superficial
similarity to pseudo-cleft construction in English in the
introduction of the E.Question-word. The appropriateness of
the E.Question-word to suit each focussed constituent will
be pointed out in observations following examples.

   The finite verb which cannot be focussed in cleft for-
mation(1) can be focussed in cleft formation(2). As in
English,the finite verb as such cannot be focussed. But it
is possible to focus on the nominalized form of the finite
verb. The substitution of the nominalised form of cey,
'do' in the other part of the sentence enables focalizat-
ion of the nominalized form of the finite verb. This for-

mation has some superficial resemblance to cleft formation
(1). Between the nominalized subject and the focussed
element, enna, an E.Question-word followed by enrāl occurs
as in cleft formation(2). Incidentally, it is worthy of
note that enna is the usual E.Question-word that occurs
here as this is the appropriate word to bring to focus the
nominalized finite verb form. The resulting cleft format-
ion is clearly cleft formation(2). The resemblance of the
cleft sentence without enna enrāl to the cleft sentences of
cleft formation(1) is only superficial. On semantic grounds,
the cleft sentence without enna enrāl, focussing the nomi-
nalization of the finite verb has to be taken as a shortened
form of the full sentence of cleft formation(2).

Examples of simple declaratory sentences will be taken
up first. The first five sentences in cleft formation(1)
will be reproduced so that similarities between the two
types of cleft formation will be clear.

(39) irāman kaṭumaiyāka ulaikkirān. (e.g.1.)
katumaiyāka ulaikkiratu yār/evan enrāl irāman.
'If (you) ask who works hard, it is Raman'.
irāman ulaikkiratu eppaṭi enrāl kaṭumaiyāka
ttān.
'If (you) ask how Raman works, it is as hard'.
irāman ceykiratu enna enrāl kaṭumaiyāka
ulsikkiratu.
'If (you) ask what Raman does, it is working
hard.
irāman cekiratu kaṭumaiyāka ulaikkiratu.
'What Raman does is working hard'.

As the E.Question-word has to be appropriate to the
focussed constituent, reflecting concord in person, number
and gender as far as possible, it seems to add more force
or emphasis to the focussed constituent. The interrogative
form yār, 'who', can denote masculine singular, feminine
singular, polite singular and plural. But evan can denote
masculine singular only as it means, 'which man?' This form
evan can occur as interrogative only when it is certain
that the question is about a male person. The adverb of
manner kaṭumaiyāka entails eppaṭi, 'how' as the appropriate
E.Question-word.

(40) kaṇṇaki kōvalaṉai maṇantāḷ. (e.g.2)
    kaṇṇaki maṇantatu yārai/evaṉai eṉṟāl kōvalaṉaiyē.
        'If (you) ask whom Kannaki married, it was
                                    Kovalan'.
    kōvalaṉai maṇantatu yār/evaḷ eṉṟāl kaṇṇakiyē.
        'If (you) ask who married Kovalan, it was
                                    Kannaki'.
    kaṇṇaki ceytatu eṉṉa eṉṟāl kōvalaṉai maṇantatu.
        'If (you) ask what Kannaki did, it was
                                    marrying Kovalan'.
    kaṇṇaki ceytatu kōvalaṉai maṇantatu.
        'What Kannaki did was marrying Kovalan'.

The interrogative form has to take the case marker
also when the focussed constituent has a case marker *(yārai/*
evaṉai in relation to *kōvalaṉai)*. The interrogative form
evaḷ, the feminine counterpart of *evaṉ,* can be substituted
for *yār* when it is certain that the focus is on a female
person. Unlike yār which is common to all rational beings,
the other form with the base *-e* inflects for all genders
and numbers, as can be seen in *evaṉ;* 'which man?', *evaḷ,*
'which woman?'; *evar,* 'which person?'; *etu,* 'which one?' and
evai, which ones?' The form *eṉṟāl* can only be translated
as something like 'if (you) asked'. Comparing these Tamil
cleft sentences with English pseudo-cleft sentences, it
seems that the Tamil periphrastic construction consisting
of E.Question-word and the conditional *eṉṟāl* do duty for
the relative pronoun in English, which pronoun is not avail-
able in Tamil.

(41) ciṟuvarkaḷ paṭacālaikku vantārkaḷ. (e.g.3)
    pāṭacālaikku vantatu yār/yāvarkaḷ/evar/evarkaḷ
                                eṉṟāl ciṟuvarkaḷ.
        'If (you) ask who came to school, it was
                                    the children'.
    ciṟuvarkaḷ vantatu eṅku eṉṟāl pāṭacālaikku.
        'If (you) ask where the children came, it
                                was to the school'.
    ciṟuvarkaḷ ceytatu eṉṉa eṉṟāl pāṭacālaikku
                                    vantatē.
        'If (you) ask what the children did, it was
                                coming to school'.
    ciṟuvarkaḷ ceytatu pāṭacālaikku vantatē.
        'What the children did was coming to school'.

There are four E.Question-words which are appropriate
for *ciruvarkaḷ*. The form *ciruvarkaḷ* is epicene plural in
sense and double plural in construction. As words like
yār and *evar* also function as polite singular in addition
to being epicene plural, the language has also forms like
yāvarkaḷ and evarkaḷ which are double plural as well as
epicene plural. Another point to note here is in sentences
where the nominalized form of the finite verb is focussed,
that and the nominalized form in *cey* always agree in their
tense.

(42) kuraṅkukal maraṅkaḷil tāvukinrana. (e.g.4)
     maraṅkaḷil tāvukinratu enna/yavai enrāl
                                          kuraṅkukaḷ.
        'If (you) ask what jumps on trees, it is the
                                          monkeys'.
     kuraṅkukaḷ tāvukinratu eṅku enrāl maraṅkaḷiḷē.
        'If (you) ask where monkeys jump, it is on
                                          the trees'.
     kuraṅkukaḷ ceykinratu enna enrāl maraṅkaḷil
                                          tāvukinratu.
        'If (you) ask what the monkeys do, it is
                                      jumping on trees'.
     kuraṅkukaḷ ceykinratu marankaḷil tāvukinratu.
        'What monkeys do is jumping on trees'.

The word enna is translated as 'what'. It can serve
to indicate both neuter singular and neuter plural. But
when neuter plural is focussed another possible E.Question-
word in use only in formal speech is yāvai/evai 'which?'
Likewise, another possible substitute for enna in neuter
singular is yātu/etu 'which?'

(43) pūnai pāḷ kuṭikkum. (e.g.5)
     pāl kuṭippatu enna/etu enrāl pūnai.
        'If (you) ask what drinks the milk, it is
                                          the cat'.
     pūnai kuṭippatu enna enral pāl tān.
        'If (you) ask what the cat drinks, it is
                                      only the milk'.
     pūnai ceyvatu enna/etu enrāl pāl kuṭippatu.
        'If (you) ask what the cat does, it is
                                      drinking milk'.
     pūnai ceyvatu pāl kuṭippatu.
        'What the cat does is drinking milk'.

Cleft formation(2) follows the same pattern as so far described. How this cleft formation functions with other slightly different constituents will be illustrated below. Examples of cleft sentences will be limited to interesting or unusual forms. As far as possible, sentences made use of in cleft formation(1) will be used to enable scholars to compare the workings of these transformations.

(44) nān pirittāniyāvil paṭikkirēn. (e.g.6)
pirittāniyavil patikkiṟatu yār/evan/eval enṟāl
nān tān.
'If (you) ask who studies in Britain, it is myself'.

In the first person, there is no distinction of gender. The person concerned can be either male or female. If there is no clue to the sex of the person, *yār*, is appropriate. If the person concerned can be identified as male or female, then *evan* or *eval*, as the case may be, can also be used.

(45) nī avanai aṭittāy. (e.g.7)
avanai aṭittatu yār/evan/aval enṟāl nī tān.
'If (you) ask who hit him, it was you'.

What is said regarding the first person pronoun applies to the second person pronoun also.

(46) elicapet makārāni ilaṅkai vantiruntār. (e.g.8).
elicapet makārāni vantiruntatu eṅkē enṟāl
ilaṅkaikku.
'If (You) ask where Queen Elizabeth visited, it was to Sri Lanka'.
ilaṅkai vantirunta makārāṇi yār/evar enṟāl
elicapet. *
'If (You) ask which Queen visited Sri Lanka, it was Elizabeth'.

As in cleft formation(1), the dative phrase should have a formal case marker when it is focussed. As Queen Elizabeth will be referred to in polite singular only, the E.Question-word appropriate for it can be only either *yār* or *evar*. The feminine singular form is considered impolite for use. But the last sentence, as such, is not a cleft sentence. Similar is the case when an attributive numeral, forming a part of the object is focussed.

(47) kantan āru katturai elutikkolvān. (e.g.9)   *
     kantan elutikkollum katturai ettanai enrāl āru.
     'If (you) ask how many essays kantan is
                              writing by himself, it is six'.

Cleft formation(1) does not allow focus on mākārāni
alone or katturai alone. Cleft formation(2) follows suit.
But focussing of these constituents is possible.

     ? ilankai vantirunta elicapet yār enrāl
                                             makārāni.
       'If (you) ask which Elizabeth visited Sri
                              Lanka, it was the Queen'.

     ? kantan elutikkollum āru enna enrāl katturai.
       'If (you) ask what six Kantan is writing
                              by himself it is essays'.
       The acceptability of the above two sentences
                                         is in doubt.

(48) arul puttakattai vācikkavēntum. (e.g.10)
     puttakattai vācikkavēntiyatu yār/even/eval
                                          enrāl arulē.
     'If (you) ask who should read the book, it
                                        is Arul'.
     arul puttakattai enna ceyyavēntiyatu enrāl
                                  vacikkavēntiyatu.
     'If (you) ask what Arul should do with the
                    book, it is that he should read'.
     arul puttakatti cceyyavēntiyatu vācikkavēntiyatu.
     'What Arul should do is (that he) should
                                             read'.

Arul can occur as a personal name for both men and
women. So yār is the proper word when the sex of the per-
son is unknown. If the person can be identified as a male
or female, then *evan* or *eval* also can be used. The E.
Question-word *enna* can occur either before or after the
nominalized form formed from *cey*. The nominalized modal
verb form vēntiyatu has to occur in both parts of the cleft
sentece.

(49) piriyai alakāna pū pitunkinal. (e.g.11)
     piriyai pitunkiya pū ettakaiyatu/eppatiyanatu
                                  enral alakanatu.*

'If (you) ask what kind of flower Piriyai
                plucked, it was beautiful'.

(50) avan civappu kkoṭi ērrinān. (e.g,12)_*
     avan ērriya koṭi enna enrāl civappu.
       'If (you) ask what flag he hoisted, it was
                                            red'.

(51) avanutaiya paṇam tiruṭappaṭṭatu. (e.g.13)
     tiruṭappaṭṭa paṇam evanuṭaiyatu enrāl
                              avanutaiyatu.*
       'If (you) ask whose money was stolen it was
                                            his'.
     avanuṭaiya paṇam ceyyappaṭṭatu enna enrāl
                              tiruṭappaṭṭatu.
       'If (you) ask what was done to his money,
                              it was stolen'.
     ? avanutaiya paṇam ceyyappaṭṭatu tiruṭappaṭṭatu.
       'What was done to his money was that it was
                                        stolen'.

Adjective forms in their attributive form cannot be
focussed but it is possible to focus them in their predi-
cate form. Even though there is some surface resemblance
to cleft formation(2) in these sentences there is no cleft
here as the essential nominalization of the finite verb
does not occur here. When a passive verb has to be focus-
sed the nominalization in *cey* also has to appear in passive
form. But the shortened form of this cleft sentence in
Tamil looks odd and its acceptability is in doubt.

(52) atai naṭatti muṭikka ennāl iyalum. (e.g.14)
     ennāl iyaluvatu etu enrāl atai naṭatti
                              muṭippatu.
       'If (you) ask which one I am able to, it is
                accomplishing its performance'.
     ennāl naṭatti muṭikka iyaluvatu etai enrāl atai
                              ttān.
       'If (you) ask which one whose performance I
                can accomplish, it is that'.

When the focus is on direct object, the E.Question-
word occurs with the accusative case marker. When the
focus is on the adverbial clause, the same E.Question-word
remains without any case marker. The focussed adverbial
clause assumes the predicate form.

(53) amaiccar nāḷakku iṅkē varakkūṭum. (e.g.15)
amaiccar iṅkē varakkūṭiyatu eppoḻutu enrāl
                                        nāḷaikkē.
'If (you) ask when the minister may come
                    here, it is just tomorrow'.
nāḷaikku iṅkē varakkūṭiyavar yār/evar enrāl
                                        amaiccar.
'If (you) ask who might come here tomorrow,
                    it is the minister'.
amaiccar nāḷaikku iṅkē ceyyakkūṭiyatu enna
                            enrāl varuvatu.
'If (you) ask what the minister can do here
                    tomorrow, it is coming'.
amaiccar nāḷaikku iṅkē ceyyakkūṭiyatu varuvatu.
'What the minister can do here tomorrow is
                                        coming'.

    The minister may be male or female but amaiccar is
used as polite singular. Tamil has amaiccan, a masculine
form, for the same word but there is no corresponding fe-
minine singular. During cleft formation focussing the
finite verb, the modal form moves to form part of the nomi-
nalization of *cey* while the infinitive form, preceding the
modal, becomes nominalized to be focussed. The form varak-
kūṭiyatu cannot be focussed.

(54) nān makaḷukkāka vāṅkinēn. (e.g.16)
nān vāṅkiyatu yārukkāka/evaḷukkāka enrāl
                                        makaḷukkāka.
'If (you) ask for whom I bought, it was for
                                        (my) daughter'.

(55) puttakam mēcaiyinmēl kiṭantatu. (e.g.17)
puttakam kiṭantatu etanmēl enrāl mēcaiyinmēl.
'If (you) ask on what the book was lying,
                            it was on the table'.

(56) avan katti koṇṭu veṭṭinān. (e.g.18)
avan veṭṭinatu etu koṇṭu enrāl katti koṇṭu.
'If (you) ask with what he cut, it was with
                                        a knife'.

(57) cavān intirā kānti pakkam cērntār. (e.g.19)
cavān cērntatu enta pakkam enrāl intirā kānti/pakkam
'If (you) ask which side Chavan joined, it
                    was Indira Gandhi's side'.

(58) kānti kaṭavuḷai ppōla ppōrrappaṭukirār. (e.g.20)
kānti pōrrappaṭuvatu eppaṭi/evvāru enrāl
kaṭavuḷaippōla.
'If (you) ask how Gandhi is venerated, it
is as a deity'.

(59) avaḷ alaku avanai kkavarntatu. (e.g.21)
avaḷ avanai kkavarnatu etu enrāl alaku.
? avanai kkavarntatu avaḷuṭaiya/avaḷatu etu
enrāl alaku.
'If (you) ask what of her attracted him, it
was beauty'.

The attributive phrase *avaḷ alaku* can be focussed
easily in cleft formation(2) but the attempt to focus on
alaku alone produces difficulties, as illustrated above.

Examples where entire clauses are focussed on cleft
sentences will follow:-

(60) avan tan perrōrai kkaṇṭapōtu makilntān. (e.g.23)
avan makilntatu eppōtu enrāl tan perrōrai
kkaṇṭapōtu.
'If (you) ask when he was happy, it was when
he saw his parents'.

(61) nāṭu aracānkam māriyatarkuppiṇ munnēriyatu.
(e.g.25)
nāṭu munnēriyatu eppolutu enrāl aracānkam
māriyatarkkuppin.
'If (you) ask when the country progressed,
it was after the government changed'.

(62) avan maruntu cāppiṭṭu uṭampu kuṇamānān. (e.g.26)
avan uṭampu kuṇamānatu eppaṭi enrāl maruntu
cāppiṭṭu.
'If (you) ask how he recovered, it was by
taking medicine'.

(63) nān en perrōrai ppārppatarkāka ppulōli pōvēn.
(e.g.27)
nān pulōli pōvatu etarkāka enrāl en perrōrai
ppārppatarkāka.
'If (you) ask why I go to Puloly, it was to
see my parents'.

(64) avaṇ uṇakku utaviyataṇal, naṇ avaṇukku
utavukireṇ. (e.g.28)
nāṇ avaṇukku utavukiratu eṇ eṇrāl avaṇ uṇakku
utaviyataṇāl,
'If (you) ask why I help him, it is because
he helped you',

(65) avaṇ tiṇamum matu aruntuvataṇāl nōyāḷiyāṇāṇ.
avaṇ nōyāḷiyāṇatu etaṇāl eṇrāl tiṇamum matu
arunttuvataṇāl.
'If (you) ask how he became ill, it is
because he takes liquor daily'.

Examples (30) to (39) cited in the section on cleft for-
mation(1) are not amenable to cleft formation(2).

III. Cleft Formation (3)

Asher (1982) has introduced this as a type of cleft
formation. The nominalization of the syntactic predicate
finite verb signifying the nominalization of the whole se-
quence of events that are left behind, an essential feature
of cleft formation, involves quite a different process here.
As Asher himself points out, the subject noun phrase alone
can be focussed in this type of transformation. This type
of transformation resembles pseudo-cleft superficially in
that a relative clause structure seems to be involved.
Examples used in illustration of other kinds of cleft will
undergo transformation here for the study of the process
involved.

(66) irāmaṇ kaṭumaiyāka ulaikkirāṇ. (e.e. 1 & 40)
kaṭumaiyāka ulaikkiravaṇ irāmaṇē.
'He who works hard is Raman'.

(67) kaṇṇaki kōvalaṇai maṇantāḷ. (e.e.2 & 41)
kōvalaṇai maṇantavaḷ kaṇṇaki tāṇ.
'She who married Kovalan was Kannaki only'.

(68) ciṟuvarkaḷ pāṭacālaikku vantārkaḷ. (e.e.3 & 42)
pāṭacālaikku vantavarkaḷ ciṟuvarkaḷ.
'Those who came to school were the children'.

(69) kuraṅkukaḷ maraṅkaḷil tāvukiṇṟaṇa. (e.g.4 & 43)
maraṅkaḷil tavukiṇṟavai kurankutaḷ.
'Those which jump on trees are the monkeys'.

(70) pūnai pāl kuṭikkum. (e.g. 5 & 44)
pāl kuṭippatu pūnai.
'That which drinks milk is the cat'.

The process of transformation involved here is not some sort of nominalization as noticed in cleft formations (1) and (2) but pronominalization. The finite verb form is pronominalized in relation to the subject noun phrase. This process results in the formation of the participial noun or what is referred to in traditional Tamil grammar as vinaiyāl aṇaiyum peyar, Some focalization seems to be involved here but the process involved seems to be quite different from the processes involved in cleft formations (1) and (2).

The transformation in example (70) does not differ in form from one cleft formation (1) in example (5). This will be the case in all examples of sentences with finite neuter singular verbs.

Even in this type of transformation, there does not seem to be concord when first and second person pronouns occur as subject noun phrase.

(71) nān pirittāniyāvil paṭikkirēn. (e.g. 6 & 45)
pirittāniyāvil paṭikkiravan/paṭikkiraval nān
tān.
'He/she who studies in Britain is myself'.

(72) nī avanai aṭittāy. (e.g. 7 & 46).
avanai aṭittavan/aṭittaval nī tān.
'He/she who hit him was yourself'.

The singular variety of these two pronouns present this problem. The participial noun has to indicate whether the semantic predicate is masuline or feminine. The polite singular forms *paṭikkiravar* and *aṭittavar* which do duty as substitutes in some circumstances when the gender of a person is unknown, are not suitable for masculine singular and feminine singular semantic predicates in this type of construction.

As the process involved in this type of transformation seems to be quite different from those involved in cleft formations (1) and (2), no further illustrations

will be given for the so-called cleft formation (3).

This paper has identified a set of sentences that require treatment in terms of some kind of cleft formation process and has made some observations on them. This collection of raw data can serve as a basis for further advanced linguistic studies.

A. VELUPPILLAI