

Organising information

PART 2

AGiU, Units 98-100

Oxford English Grammar Course (Advanced): 257-61.

FOCUSING:

CLEFTS & PSEUDOCLEFTS

Unit 98. Focusing with clefts (*it*-clauses) and pseudoclefts (*what*-clauses)

IT-CLEFTS

- ***It is ...+ relative clause with *that* / *wh*-word***
 - used to highlight an expression we want to emphasize.
 - HOW? Reversing the information principle:
 - Information pple: given+ new
 - It-clefts: new (focus) + given
- the *relative clause* contains already known or less important information:
 - [It was **James**]_{new/focus} [that/who crashed the car last week]_{old/less important}.
 - It was only **last Sunday** *that/when* I was playing tennis with her.
 - It was in Paris *that/where* I saw her.
 - It was **by improving distribution** *that/how* he saved the firm.

Unit 98. Focusing with clefts (*it*-clauses) and pseudoclefts (*what*-clauses)

PSEUDOCLEFTS

- *What is* → to **focus** attention on certain information **OUTSIDE** the pseudocleft.
- Following the information principle: given + new
 - [What we gave them]_{old/less important} [was **some home-made cake**]_{new/focus}.
- More conversational.
- Functions:
 - New topic
 - Give a reason
 - Give instructions, explanation;
 - to correct sth. said/done (e.g. *What I said was this, not that*).
- Pseudoclefts can be used to focus on actions (verbs):
 - **What he did was** (to) sell his flat and move.

Unit 98. Focusing with clefts (*it*-clauses) and pseudoclefts (*what*-clauses)

- Pseudoclefts
 - only with ***what*-clauses**.
 - alternatives to other ***wh*-words** = noun + *that/wh*- clause:
 - The only **reason** (why/that) I left the party was...
 - The **place** (where/that) you should play football is...
 - **Somebody** (who/that) I enjoy reading is...
 - The time (that/when) I work best is...

1 Change these sentences to emphasise each part in turn.

- 1 Mary was supposed to interview the new students today.

.....
.....
.....

2 Change the sentences so as to emphasise the words in *italics*. Begin *What*

- She broke *her ankle*. ...*What she broke was her ankle.*.....

- 1 I want *more time to think*.

.....

- 2 I need *something to eat*.

.....

- 3 She hated *his possessiveness*.

.....

Ex. 1

1. It was Mary that/who was supposed...
2. It was the new students that Mary was supposed to interview.
3. It was today that Mary was supposed to...

Ex. 2

1. What I want is more time to think.
2. What I need is something to eat.
3. What she hated was his possessiveness.

INVERSION

AGIU 99-100

- **Statements:** verb usually follows subject
- When this word order is reversed = ***inversion***
- It puts an emphasis on what is being said and makes the statement striking and surprising.
- **Two main types**
 1. auxiliary + subject + the rest of the verb phrase (inversion is **necessary**)
 - I had rarely seen such a view = **Rarely had** I seen such a view. (*not* Rarely I had seen ...)
 2. verb + subject (inversion is **optional**):
 - Alex stood in the doorway. = **In the doorway stood** Alex. (*or ... Alex stood.*)

TYPE 1

AUX + SUBJECT + VERB+ REST OF THE VP

a) Questions

- *Has your mother spoken to Arthur?*
- *I saw Mary yesterday. Did you see her?*
- **Inversion NOT** used in **spoken** or **indirect** questions
 - *You've seen John? / I wondered what time the film was starting.*
- **Formal writing** : inversion sometimes used with *be* in indirect questions after *how*, especially when subject is long:
 - *I wondered how reliable was the information I had been given.*

b) Sentences with certain kinds of **if-clause** (especially in **literary** style)
(also AGIU unit 83)

Examples:

- It would be a serious setback, **were *the talks*** to fail.
- ***Had I known*** what was going to happen, I would never have left her alone (= *If I had known...*).
- ***Should you need*** more information, please telephone our main office.
- Rather **more formal** than those with 'if'.
- In negative clauses with inversion, don't use contracted form
 - ***Had the plane not been diverted***, they would have arrived early. (*not Hadn't the plane ...*)

c) After AS, THAN, In comparisons:

Examples:

- She travelled a great deal, **as** *did* most of her friends.
- Research shows that parents watch more television **than** *do their children*.
- Literary style
- **Don't invert** subject and verb after *as* or *than* **when** the **subject** is a **pronoun**
 - We now know a lot more about the universe than **we** did ten years ago. (*not ... than did we* ten years ago.)

d) After so + adjective ... that
 such + be ... that

- **So + adjective** at the beginning of a clause to emphasise the adjective=> subject and first auxiliary are inverted (*do* is used when there's no auxiliary)
 - *So ridiculous did she look that everybody burst out laughing.*
 - *So successful was her business, that Lana was able to retire at the age of 50.*
- **Such + be** at the beginning of a clause to emphasise the extent or degree of something:
 - *Such is the popularity of the play that the theatre is likely to be full every night.*

e) After SO, NEITHER, NOR

- After *neither* and *nor* when these words begin a clause to introduce a negative addition to a previous negative clause or sentence
 - For some time after the explosion Jack couldn't hear, and neither could he see.
 - The council never wanted the new supermarket to be built, nor did local residents.
- After *so*
 - *So do I*
- However, when *so* introduces **surprised agreement** with what has been said, inversion is NOT used: (AGIU unit 62 D)
 - That's Peter, look! - *So he is!*

f) After negative and restrictive adverbial expressions

- **Many adverbs and adverbial expressions** with **negative** meaning can be put at the **beginning** of a sentence, especially in formal style. When this happens, we use inversion:
 - **Under no circumstances** *can we accept credit cards.*
 - **Hardly** *had I arrived* when *a quarrel broke out.*
- Other possible words or expressions are ***seldom, rarely, never, scarcely, only*** + adverbial expression, ***not only... but also, ... no ...***, etc).
 - **Never** *have I felt better.*
 - **Seldom** *had I seen* such a remarkable creature.
 - **Such** *is fate!*
 - **Scarcely** *had we started* lunch when *the doorbell rang.*
 - **No sooner** *was she back at home* than *she realized her mistake.*
 - **Only** after a year *did I begin* to see the results of my work.
 - **On no account** *are visitors allowed* to feed the animals.
 - **Not only** *did we lose* all our money, but we also came close to losing our lives.
 - **Little** *do you know* about the whole situation!
 - **So** strong *was the wind* that I could hardly control the car.
- Note that after ***hardly*** and ***scarcely*** WHEN is used, whereas ***no sooner*** is followed by THAN. ***Little, few, so*** and ***such*** cause inversion when **NOT followed by a noun.**

AGIU, page 250. Rewrite each sentence with a similar meaning starting with a word or phrase from the box followed by inversion of the verb and the subject.

**Had; Hardly; Little; Seldom; Should; So; Not for one moment;
Under no circumstances; Such; Were; Only if; Only in**

- 1 I didn't imagine that the boss had called me into her office to fire me.
- 2 The police will only investigate the matter further if an official complaint is made.
- 3 The instructions were so complicated, that it was impossible to assemble the machine.
- 4 If we had known how ill Rob was, we would have taken him straight to the hospital.
- 5 The wind was so strong that all the trees in the park were blown down.
- 6 She didn't often regret her lack of formal education, although she was sometimes aware of gaps in her knowledge.
- 7 You should only phone for an ambulance in an emergency.
- 8 There was never any disagreement between us
- 9 If it were not for financial assistance from the government, the museum would have closed long ago
- 10 They had only just finished eating before a waiter started to clear away the plates.
- 11 Children should never be allowed into the room without adult supervision.
- 12 If the bridge is ever built, it will be welcomed by the local community.

1 I didn't imagine that the boss had called me into her office to fire me.

- *Little did I imagine that the boss had called me into her office to fire me*

2 The police will only investigate the matter further if an official complaint is made

- *Only if an official complaint is made will the police investigate the matter further*

3 The instructions were so complicated, that it was impossible to assemble the machine.

- *So complicated were the instructions, that ...*

4 If we had known how ill Rob was, we would have taken him straight to the hospital.

- *Had we known how ill Rob was, we ...*

5 The wind was so strong that all the trees in the park were blown down.

- *Such was the strength of the wind that .. (or So strong was the wind that ...)*

6 She didn't often regret her lack of formal education, although she was sometimes aware of gaps in her knowledge.

- *Seldom did she regret her lack of formal education.*

7 You should only phone for an ambulance in an emergency.

- *Only in an emergency should you phone for an ambulance. (or Only if there is an emergency should you phone for an ambulance.)*

8 There was never any disagreement between us

- *Not for one moment was there any / a disagreement between us*

9 If it were not for financial assistance from the government, the museum would have closed long ago

- *Were it not for financial assistance from the government*

10 They had only just finished eating before a waiter started to clear away the plates.

- *Hardly had they finished eating before a waiter started to clear away the plates.*

11 Children should never be allowed into the room without adult supervision.

- *Under no circumstances should children be allowed into the room without adult supervision*

12 If the bridge is ever built, it will be welcomed by the local community.

- *Should the bridge ever be built, .*

TYPE 2

VERB + SUBJ + REST OF VP

a) After adverbial expressions of place and direction (also AGIU unit 76A)

- STRUCTURE: whole verb before the subject; *do/does/did* not used!!!
- GENRE: narratives, (formal) descriptive writing & reports.
- EFFECT/PURPOSE: to emphasize the location or highlight what comes at the end.
- WHEN TO USE IT: + *BE* and **intransitive** verbs such as *hang, lie, live, sit, stand; come, fly, go march, roll, run, swim, walk*.
 - Round the corner **walked** a tall policeman.
 - On a hill in front of them **stood** a great castle.
 - Under the table **was lying** a half-conscious young man.
 - Here **comes** Paul! but Here *he comes*!
 - There **goes** the vicar!

Note that inversion is not used when one of these intransitive verbs is followed by an adverb of manner; with other intransitive verbs; or with transitive verbs.

- Through the waves the boy **swam** **powerfully**_[adverb of manner].
- Outside the church the choir **sang**_[belonging to 'other intransitive verbs'].
- In the garden Nik **built**_[transitive verb] a play house for the children.

b) Inversion with verbs of reporting

- especially when the subject is a long one (**never** if the subject is a **pronoun**)
 - "I've had enough", *John said/said John.*
 - "Let's go," **suggested** Henry/Henry suggested.
 - "Who's paying?" **shouted** the fat man in the corner. BUT **shouted he!!! → he shouted.

Exercise 76.1. Rewrite the sentences putting the italicised adverbs of place or direction at the front of the clause. If possible, invert the order of subject and verb

1 A dark wood was *at the bottom of the garden*.

At the bottom of the garden was a dark wood.

2. The car stopped suddenly and Daniel jumped *out*.

3. Two small children stood *outside the door*.

4. The boys were playing cricket *in the park*, despite the muddy conditions.

5. A jade necklace hung *around her neck*.

6. The man released the monkey and it climbed *up the tree*.

7. The door burst open and a delegation from the striking workers marched *in*.

8. While Marko was looking around for his net the fish swam *away*.

9. Most of the furniture was modern, but a very old grandfather clock was *in the corner*.

10. Lea found it difficult to concentrate *in the office*, but she worked more efficiently *at home*.

1. A dark wood was **at the bottom of the garden**.

At the bottom of the garden was a dark wood.

2. The car stopped suddenly and Daniel jumped **out**.

...and out jumped Daniel.

3. Two small children stood **outside the door**.

Outside the door stood two small children.

4. The boys were playing cricket **in the park**, despite the muddy conditions.

In the park the boys were playing cricket... (NO INVERSION)

5. A jade necklace hung **around her neck**.

Around her neck hung a jade necklace.

6. The man released the monkey and it climbed **up the tree**.

... and up the tree it climbed (NO INVERSION)

7. The door burst open and a delegation from the striking workers marched **in**.

... and in marched a delegation from the striking workers.

8. While Marko was looking around for his net the fish swam **away**.

... away swam the fish.

9. Most of the furniture was modern, but a very old grandfather clock was **in the corner**.

.... in the corner was a very old grandfather clock.

10. Lea found it difficult to concentrate **in the office**, but she worked more efficiently **at home**.

In the office Lea found (NO INVERSION) it difficult to concentrate, but at home she worked more efficiently (NO INVERSION)



HOMEWORK



1) Do all the exercises in units 98-100 of your grammar books. Check the answers. Should you have any doubts do not hesitate to send your questions to the grammar forum

2) Watch the following video and find examples of inversion and clefting. Send your answers to the campus virtual

- Addicted To Likes | Poppy Jamie | TEDxHollywood
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCA_g2i1ZG8

3) Additionally, send examples of the two structures found in any TV series that you watch or any press article that you read during this week



- 4) Look at the following 'skeleton' sentences and, using the appropriate tenses, write a complete sentence from each skeleton as in the example. Then rewrite each sentence beginning with the word(s) in bold type.

e.g. I / **no sooner** / sit down / my seat / curtain rise / play begin
*I had **no sooner** sat down in my seat than the curtain rose and the play began.*
***No sooner** had I sat down in my seat than the curtain rose and the play began.*

- 1 Lights / be / **rarely** / on / in / museum / midnight, / so I / realise / something strange / happen / that night
- 2 It / be / **not until** / he / tell / Linda / his name / she / recognise / Eric, / who / use / be / schoolfriend / hers
- 3 Rollercoaster / **no sooner** / start / move / I know / I make / terrible mistake / by / agree / get on
- 4 Cathy's front door / **not only** / stand wide open / when she / get / home, / but / lock / be / also / broken
- 5 We / **seldom** / use / enjoy / visit / my grandparents / when I / be / child because / they / be / often / strict / us

SOLUTIONS



- 1 Lights / be / **rarely** / on / in / museum / midnight, / so I / realise / something strange / happen / that night
- 2 It / be / **not until** / he / tell / Linda / his name / she / recognise / Eric, / who / use / be / schoolfriend / hers
- 3 Rollercoaster / **no sooner** / start / move / I know / I make / terrible mistake / by / agree / get on

1. Lights were rarely on in the museum at midnight, so I realised that something strange was happening that night.

Rarely were lights on in the museum at midnight, so I realised that something strange was happening that night.

2. It was not until he (had) told Linda his name that she recognised Eric, who used to be a schoolfriend of hers.

Not until he (had) told Linda his name did she recognise Eric, who used to be a schoolfriend of hers.

3. The rollercoaster had no sooner started to move than I knew that I had made a terrible mistake by agreeing to get on.

No sooner had the rollercoaster started to move than I knew that I had made a terrible mistake by agreeing to get on.

4 Cathy's front door / **not only** / stand wide open / when she / get / home, / but / lock / be / also / broken

5 We / **seldom** / use / enjoy / visit / my grandparents / when I / be / child because / they / be / often / strict / us

4. Cathy's front door was not only standing wide open when she got home, but the lock had also been broken.

Not only was Cathy's front door standing wide open when she got home, but the lock had also been broken.

5. We seldom used to enjoy visiting my grandparents when I was a child, because they were often strict with us.

Seldom did we use to enjoy visiting my grandparents when I was a child, because they were often strict with us.