On the origin and content of English *there*

This paper brings evidence from argument structure to bear on the many questions surrounding the English expletive *there*. Based on apparent "selection" of *there* by particular verbs, I build a case for low *there*-insertion, where the expletive is base-generated in the specifier of a verbalizing head *v*. This low position of origin is motivated by a stringently local relation that holds between *there* and its associate DP. The existence of such a relation in turn sheds light on the content of the expletive *there* itself, suggesting that it agrees with the associate DP in features including Case.

1. *There* originates low. A first motivation for a low-origin account comes from data showing apparent "selection" of *there* by various predicates, e.g. *arrive* and *hang* (1) but not *disappear* or *fall* (2). Cases like (2) represent a notable point of overgeneration in accounts such as Lasnik (1995) and Chomsky (2000). Building on work by Levin (1993), we find a highly systematic pattern: *there*-insertion targets those unaccusatives that are not inchoatives. As such, *there*-insertion is possible with just those verbs that do not have a causation reading for *by itself* or *from*-PPs, as shown in (3) vs (4).

The restriction of *there* to non-inchoative unaccusatives is explained if *there* must be generated in the specifier of a verbalizer head, *v*. I argue that English contains three such verbalizers: CAUSE_v (Pylkkänen 2002), Voice_v (Kratzer 1996), and a semantically contentless verbalizer $v_{\sim}$ (Marantz 1997). Both CAUSE and Voice place semantic restrictions on their specifiers: the specifier of Voice expresses the external argument, and the specifier of CAUSE introduces a causing event (as shown above). Thus, neither agentive predicates, which include Voice, nor inchoative predicates, which include CAUSE, are compatible with *there*-insertion; in both cases, the relevant specifier position is already occupied for semantic reasons. This leaves only "pure" unaccusatives with a free Spec,*v*, position, and it is here that *there* is first Merged. Thus we find that structural differences between predicate types are responsible for apparent "selection" in *there*-insertion.

2. *There* agrees with its associate. A second class of evidence indicates a strictly local relationship between *there* and its associate DP. First, *there*-clauses of all stripes require a DP associate. The fact that this associate must be local to *there* is evident in raising sentences, where *there* is possible just in case it is compatible with the downstairs verb, as shown in (5). I take this fact to show that *there* must originate on the edge of the minimal phase properly containing its associate. Low insertion in this position is motivated by the stringent locality of the relationship between *there* and its associate: agreement is only possible from the specifier of a phase head into the sister of the phase head, but not otherwise across phase boundaries. By this same token, the system easily accounts for cases of "too many *there*s", as in (6); the higher *there* is too many phases away from the associate DP, and so agreement is blocked. The locality-based solution to the too-many-*there*s problem is lent further support by cases like (7), where typical raising verbs like *seem* embed nominals, not clauses. The fact that *there*-insertion is indeed possible in the specifier of *seem* in (7) shows quite clearly that the too-many-*there*s problem with raising verbs arises not because raising verbs do not license *there*, but because *there* must attain a local relationship with its associate. *There*-insertion may target raising verbs only if an associate is available locally; otherwise, raising verbs must raise *there*. By requiring locality in the *there*-associate relation, we are able both to solve the too-many-*there*s problem and to explain why *there* with raising verbs must be generated downstairs (if there is a downstairs).

3. All Agreement is equally local. The approach explored above allows us to account for low origin and locality in *there*-insertion in a unified system based on local Agreement. This Agreement must be local to all phases, including those defined by unaccusative $v_{\sim}$. However, given a standard phase-based account of Agreement, many other operations of Agree are not constrained so rigidly: Case-assignment by T to the associate DP may ignore the unaccusative phase, for instance.

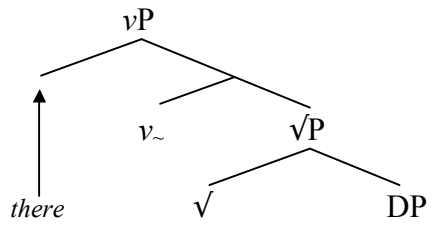
This "locality gap" between instances of the operation Agree may be remedied, however, upon investigation of the precise feature(s) in which *there* and its associate agree. Following several proposals in the expletives literature, I suggest that *there* first agrees in Case with its associate, and then is the target of Case assignment for its associate. *There* is then effectively a Case proxy for its associate. Once the Case feature is identified with the feature in which *there* must agree, the domains for Case-assignment and *there*-associate Agreement are the same. Both must be local to every *v*P. This allows us to dispense with the otherwise unnecessary distinction between strong and weak phases (Chomsky 2001). Evidence from *there*-insertion thus supports Legate's (2002) contention that all verbalizer heads, including those found with unaccusatives, have the same core locality properties.

(1) There arrived/hung in the studio a large portrait of Byron.

(2) *There disappeared/fell into the abyss a huge boulder.

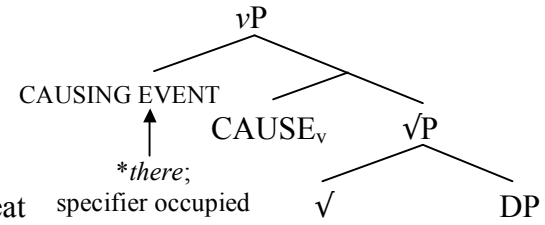
(3) Non-inchoatives; *there*-insertion. Example: *appear*

a. The ghost appeared (all) by itself
   * 'without outside help' reading
b. The ghost appeared from the shadows/the spell
   * cause reading
c. There appeared a ghost in the doorway



(4) Inchoatives; **there*-insertion. Example: *melt*

a. The ice cream melted (all) by itself
   ✓ 'without outside help' reading
b. The ice cream melted from the heat
   ✓ cause reading
c. *There melted some ice cream in the heat



(5) a. *There seemed to disappear a dagger from the armory.
b. There seemed to appear a dagger in front of Macbeth.

(6) a. *There seemed there to be a problem.
b. [$_{TP}$ there$_1$ [$_{vP}$ ~~there~~$_1$ seem [$_{TP}$ there$_2$ to [$_{vP}$ ~~there~~$_2$ be [$_{DP}$ a problem]]]]]

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(7) a. There seemed nothing we could do about the hostage situation.
b. [$_{TP}$ there [$_{vP}$ ~~there~~ seem [$_{DP}$ nothing we could do about the hostage situation]]]

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