

The reanalysis of unaccusative constructions as existentials in Brazilian Portuguese*

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Abstract: In English, unaccusative constructions with presentative verbs and existential constructions exhibit similar behavior with regard to agreement: the verb agrees with the postverbal nominal. In French, unaccusatives and existentials also behave alike, but differently from English, the verb agrees with the expletive 'il'. In Romance Null-Subject languages, there is an asymmetry regarding agreement behavior: in unaccusative constructions, agreement holds between the verb and the postverbal nominal; in existentials, there is no agreement between the verb and the postverbal DP/NP. Brazilian Portuguese unaccusative constructions show a unified behavior with existentials where agreement is concerned. In this respect, it contrasts with European Portuguese and other Romance Null-Subject languages, which uniformly and obligatorily exhibit agreement between the verb and the postverbal nominal. The objective of this paper is to analyse these and other cross-linguistic differences and language internal contrasts regarding unaccusative and existential constructions.

Key words: *existential constructions, unaccusative constructions, agreement, Case.*

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Resumo: Em inglês, construções inacusativas com verbos presentativos e construções existenciais comportam-se de forma semelhante no que diz respeito à concordância: o verbo concorda com o elemento nominal pós-verbal. Em francês, inacusativos e existências também têm comportamento semelhante, mas, diferentemente do inglês, o verbo concorda com o expletivo 'il'. Nas línguas românicas de sujeito-nulo, há uma assimetria no que concerne a concordância: em construções inacusativas, a concordância se dá entre o verbo e o nome pós-verbal (DP/NP). As construções inacusativas do português brasileiro têm um comportamento único quanto à concordância. Neste item, o PB contrasta com o PE e com outras línguas românicas de sujeito-nulo, que, de maneira uniforme e obrigatória fazem a concordância entre o verbo e o nominal pós-verbal. O objetivo deste texto é analisar essas e outras diferenças interlingüísticas e os contrastes lingüísticos internos, nas construções inacusativas e existenciais.

1. The aims of this chapter

English unaccusative constructions with presentative verbs (*arrive, appear, etc*) and existential constructions exhibit similar behavior with regard to agreement: the inflected verb agrees with the postverbal nominal.

- [1] a. There **are** cats under the table.
b. There **have** arrived many letters.

French unaccusatives and existentials also exhibit a similar behavior where agreement is concerned, but, contrary to English, there is no agreement relation between the verb and the postverbal nominal. What the verb agrees with is the expletive *il*.

- [2] a. Il y a des chats sous la table.
b. Il est arrivé plusieurs des lettres.¹

¹ French has the locative clitic *y* only in the existential sentence. The auxiliary is also different: *avoir* (=have) for the existential and *être* (=be) for the unaccusative. We will discuss these facts later.

Romance NS languages, in their turn, present an asymmetry in agreement behavior: the unaccusatives are more like English, with agreement holding between the verb and the postverbal nominal, and the existentials are more like French, without agreement between the verb and the postverbal NP/DP.

- [3] a. **Hay** gatos debajo de la mesa.
has cats under the table
b. **Llegaron** muchas cartas.
arrived+3P many letters

Unaccusative constructions in NS languages form with inergatives a more natural set than with existentials, not only regarding agreement, but also regarding lack of definiteness effect:

- [4] b. **Han** llegado muchas cartas/ las cartas.
have+ 3P arrived many letters/ the letters
[5] a. **Han** telefonado muchos amigos/los amigos.
have+3P telephoned many friends/os amigos

European Portuguese (EP) and earlier phases of BP² behave exactly like Spanish:

- [6] a. Há gatos em baixo da mesa.
has cats under the table
b. Chegaram muitas cartas/as cartas.
arrived+3P many letters/ the letters
c. Telefonaram muitos amigos/ os amigos.
telephoned+3P many friends/the friends

EP

We will now see what we have in present day BP³:

² We will label both European Portuguese and earlier phases of BP as EP.

³ We will leave the inergative constructions aside.

- [7] a. Tem gatos em baixo da mesa.
has cats under the table
b. Chegou muitas cartas.
arrived+3pS many letters

BP

Today BP unaccusative constructions exhibit a unified behavior with existentials where agreement is concerned.⁴ In this respect, it contrasts not only with EP, but also with other Romance null subject languages, which uniformly and obligatorily exhibit agreement between the inflected unaccusative verb and the post-verbal nominal.

Roberts's (1993b) compares the changes that are occurring in BP with those that occurred in Old French, namely loss of null subjects and VS order. Here we detect another similarity: the unaccusative VS in BP has also become similar to the unaccusative construction in French in that both lack agreement. There is, however, a noticeable difference between the two: French has an overt expletive *il*, and BP a null subject.⁵ French has a locative clitic *y*, but BP does not. French has the auxiliary *être* with the unaccusative verb and the verb *avoir* with the existential, as can be seen in [2] repeated here as [8]. BP uses *ter* as the existential verb and also as the auxiliary in periphrastic forms, as can be seen in [9] repeated here as [11].⁶

- [8] a. Il y a des chats sous la table.
b. Il est arrivé plusieurs des lettres.⁷

- [9] a. Tem gatos debaixo da mesa.
b. Tem chegado muitas cartas.
has arrived many letters

⁴ Franchi et al (1998) show that even in data taken from interviews with educated Brazilians, agreement may be absent.

⁵ See arguments against expletive *pro* in Borer (1986) and more recently in Picallo (1998).

⁶ Franchi et al (1998) show that *ter*, compared to *haver* and *existir* is by far the most frequent (50% of the total).

⁷ French has the locative clitic *y* only in the existential sentence. The auxiliary is also different: *avoir* (=have) for the existential and *être* (=be) for the unaccusative. We will discuss these facts later.

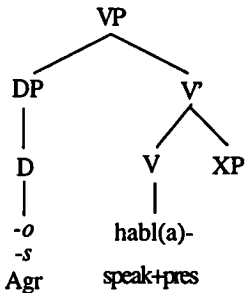
Auxiliary selection is an important aspect of existential constructions as it may, according to Nunes (1995), account for the case of the postverbal nominal as we will see later.

What is behind these cross-linguistic differences and language internal contrasts is the problem that will be focused in the present paper.

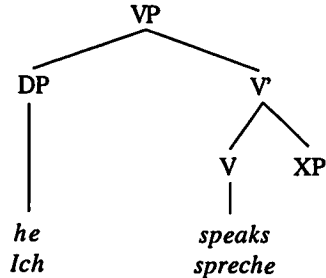
2. A theory of the NS parameter and its account of Romance inversion (Kato 1999)

Before proposing a new theory of unaccusative constructions, I will present Kato's (1999) account of the null subject properties, more specifically the nature of the so-called *pro* and free inversion. Kato considers agreement affixes of prodrop languages to be a D category, like clitics and free pronouns, thus appearing as independent items in the numeration.⁸ They would merge as arguments of VP, constituting a defective D.⁹ Compare the first stage of the derivation of a language that has pronominal agreement (Fig [10] a) with languages that have free weak subject pronouns like English and German (Fig [10] b) and languages that have subject clitics like Trentino (Fig [10] c):

[10] a. Spec of VP in Spanish pronouns



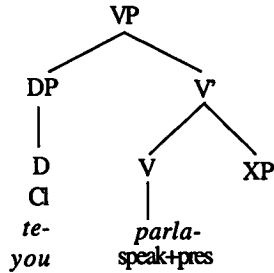
b. Spec of VP in languages with free weak pronouns



⁸ See Rohrbacher (1992), Galves (1993) and Speas (1994), who place Agr in the head of AGRP but also entertain the hypothesis that Agreement morpheme is an independent and interpretable item in the derivation. In Kato's (1999, 2000a) analysis, however, it merges as the V argument, as head of D.

⁹ Affixes do not project complements like sometimes clitics and pronouns can.

c. Spec of VP of languages with clitic subjects like Trentino and Fiorentino

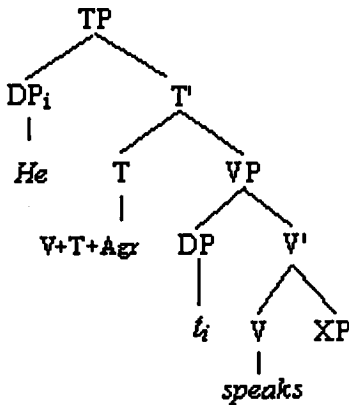


Kato (1999) also claims that, like free weak pronouns and clitics, these affixes have Case and ϕ -features. If T has strong V-features, it attracts the tensed V or the Auxiliary in order to have its features checked. If T has strong D-features, it will attract the weak pronoun, the clitic or the Affix. Pronouns move as XPs, and clitics and affixes, which are minimal and maximal, move as heads. Spec of T is projected in the former case, but not in the latter case.

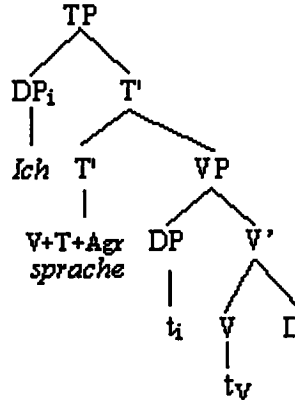
Thus, in English and German the free weak pronoun raises to the D in [Spec,TP] as in [11]. The difference between the two languages is overt V-to-T movement in German and covert movement (or movement of only the Formal Features) in English.

[11] Languages with free weak pronouns

Type a. English

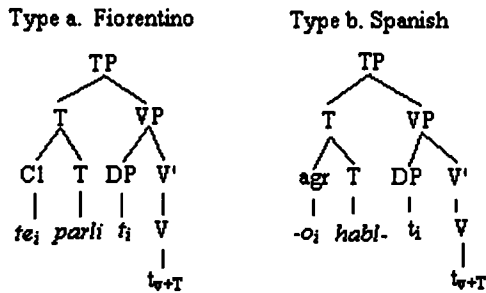


Type b. German



In NS languages like Spanish ([10] b) and Trentino ([10] a), the pronominal affixes and the subject clitics are attracted to T. The subject clitics or the agreement affixes are adjoined to T. T has its nominative case eliminated after checking. However, the ϕ -features of the agreement affix are retained as with free weak pronouns. Spec of T is not projected. The difference between clitics and affixes lies only in the direction they appear at spell-out.

[12] Languages with subject clitics and with pronominal Agr



The Agr chain and the Clitic chain, with their heads in INFL and tails in SPEC of VP, are interpreted at LF as the subject of the clause. The same holds for clitic subjects.

As for lexical pronouns in NS languages, following many Romanists (cf., for instance Soriano 1989; Raposo 1994; Barbosa 1997), Kato considers them strong pronouns, and places them in a projection above TP. Kato (1999) proposes that strong pronouns can double any weak ϕ -feature form: weak pronouns, clitics or even Agreement affixes when these are [+pronominal]. Thus subject doubling in NS languages is not a phenomenon that involves a silent *pro*, but the Agreement affix itself. Thus, while French doubles the subject clitic and English the weak pronoun, Spanish doubles the Agreement itself.

[13] a. MOI_i, je_i, ...

b. ME_i, I_i

[14] YO_i, V+ Agr_i

Comparing the three, Kato (1999) proposes that the case of the strong pronoun is not assigned or checked: it is a *default* case, the nominative being the *default* in Romance NS languages. But recall that for Kato (1999) NS languages have two types

of nominative: the unchecked *default* nominative and the nominative feature of pronominal Agreement, which has to be checked along with its ϕ -features against those of T. Checking eliminates all non-interpretable features, which means that in [14] only the ϕ -features in the verb agreement is retained. This is possible because Agreement entered as a pronominal with interpretable features.

Kato (1999) assumes that in NS languages both lexical pronouns and ordinary DPs are in Spec of Σ , where they are nominative by *default* and are interpreted as subjects of a categorical sentence.¹⁰

- [15] a. Yo lo comi
 I it ate.+1pS ('I ate it')
 b. Juan lo comió.
 Juan it ate+3pS ('Juan ate it')

- [16] a. Lo comi yo.
 it ate+1pS I ('I ate it')
 b. Lo comió Juan.
 it ate+3pS Juan ('Juan ate it')

- [15] a'. [_{Σ P} Yo [_{TP} lo comi [_{VP}]]]
 b'. [_{Σ P} Juan [_{TP} lo comió [_{VP}]]]

In order to get VS order, TP is moved upwards adjoining to $\Sigma\Pi$.

- [16] a'' [_{Σ P} [_{TP} lo comi [_{VP}] [_{Σ P} Yo t_{TP}]]
 b'' [_{Σ P} [_{TP} lo comió [_{VP}] [_{Σ P} Juan t_{TP}]]

¹⁰ The thetic *vs.* categorical judgement of classical philosophy was used in Kuroda (1976) to distinguish sentences with *-wa* and *-ga* in Japanese. Franchi et al, (1998) and Nascimento (1984) use the terms predicational and presentational for the same dichotomy. I follow here Martins (1996) analysis for European Portuguese and Britto's (2000) for BP. For the latter, SVO in EP is the categorical sentence and VS, the thetic one. For BP, Britto proposes that SVO is the thetic sentence and Top, SVO the categorical one.

Thus, free inversion raises the maximal projection TP to a position above Σ P, a prosodically motivated movement in the sense of Zubizarreta (1998)¹¹, so that the nuclear stress falls on Spec of Σ , as it becomes the rightmost element, or the deepest in Cinque's (1993) terms. The DP in Spec of Σ remains *in-situ* and encodes the *default* nominative case. Inspired by earlier work by Chomsky (1971) and Jackendoff (1972) Zubizarreta postulates the Focus Prosody Correspondence Principle (FPCP), which states that "the focuses constituent (or F-marked constituent) of a phrase must contain the intonation nucleus of that phrase" (p. 38).

Now consider non-NS languages like English. Such languages have weak lexical pronouns occupying the position of Spec of TP. Other DPs can also appear there for checking purposes. Kato shows that in order to raise the inflected verb phrase leftwards to yield the free inversion pattern ([[VX] S]), such languages would have to perform an illegal operation, namely move an X' category:

- [17] a. John can speak Tagalog.
b. *Can speak Tagalog John.

- [17] a' [TP John [T' can [VP speak Tagalog]]]
b' T' [can speak Tagalog]_i [TP John [T' t_i.]]

This does not mean that English cannot have the subject focalized. Zubizarreta (1998) shows that English focalizes the subject *in-situ*, and this is possible because in Germanic languages defocalized and anaphoric elements are metrically invisible for the NSR.

As for what happened in Brazilian Portuguese, Kato claims that its referential agreement system lost its pronominal status and today BP is more like English than Spanish in that it has both strong and weak subject pronouns. To have weak nominative pronouns means that Spec of TP is projected and subject focalization cannot be obtained by subject inversion. Instead, what we have is the process found in English and Germanic languages: focalization *in-situ*, which is only allowed in Spanish and Italian in contrastive focus constructions.

¹¹ According to Zubizarreta, since checking necessity does not motivate movement, it is not constrained by economy principles like greed. Thus if VP raises in order for the DP to get the focal stress, it would be a case of greed violation.

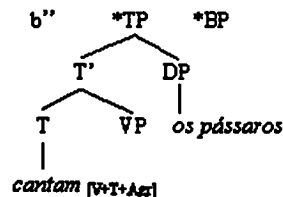
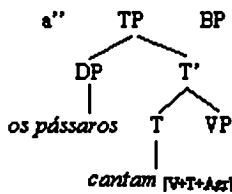
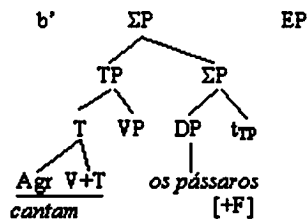
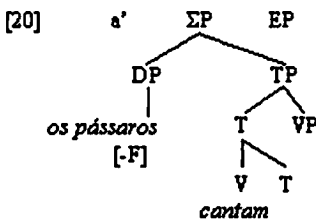
- [18] a. JOHN ate an apple.
 b. O JOÃO comeu uma maçã.
 c. *JUAN comió una manzana.
 d. *GIANNI a mangiato una mela.

The dissimilarity with English is in the fact that strong and weak pronouns in BP are quasi-homophonous. Moreover, the *default* case in English is accusative, while in BP it is nominative.

- [19] a. O João, ele é meu amigo.
 the John he is my friend ("John, he is my friend")
 b. Você, cê é meu amigo.
 you you are my friend

We can see now why BP has lost its inversion with agreement. As its referential agreement system ceased to be pronominal, the agreement affixes can no longer appear as independent items in the numeration. They are part of the verb entry and have no case or ϕ -features of their own. What merges with the verb is a free pronoun or a full DP in spec of T. Consider [20]a and b and their representation:

- [20] a. Os pássaros cantam Ok EP Ok BP
 b. Cantam os passaros. Ok EP *BP



Notice that the SV order in EP and BP has a different representation. In EP, since Agreement is pronominal, it is an affixal argument, which adjoins to T to check the nominative feature. As the verb that raises to T has only tense features, the agreement features are retained in Agr, as they are interpretable features. The lexical subject is only merged in topic position. Spec of T is not projected and movement of TP is possible. In BP Agreement is not pronominal and is part of the verb inflection in the numeration. What is merged as the argument of the verb is the DP *os pássaros*, which raises to Spec of T to check its nominative and ϕ -features. The nominative case of the lexical DP here is not a *default* case as in EP and needs checking. The inflected verb raises to T to check its strong V-features. The constituent that needs movement to yield the VS order is not a maximal projection in this case, and, therefore, VS order is ruled out.

In the next section we will see that unaccusative VS constructions in Romance null subject languages can be derived in a parallel fashion.

3. Unaccusative constructions as free inversion in null subject languages

In general, the unaccusative construction in NS languages in Romance

a) can have its only argument null as in [21]a.

b) like VS with inergatives, does not exhibit definiteness effect, admitting both [21]b. and c.

c) like VS with inergatives, exhibits agreement between the inflected verb and the postverbal nominal.

[21] a. Llegaron.

arrived+3P ("They arrived")

b. Llegaron ellos.

arrived+3P they

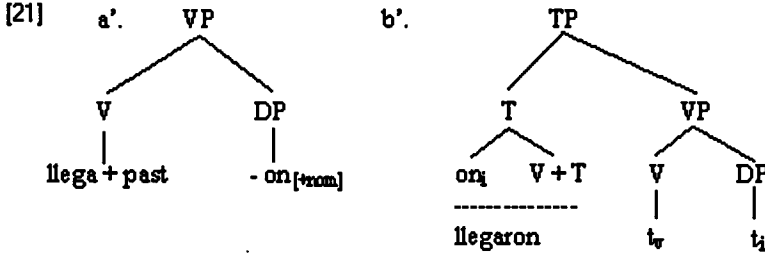
d. Llegaron muchas cartas.

arrived+3P many letters

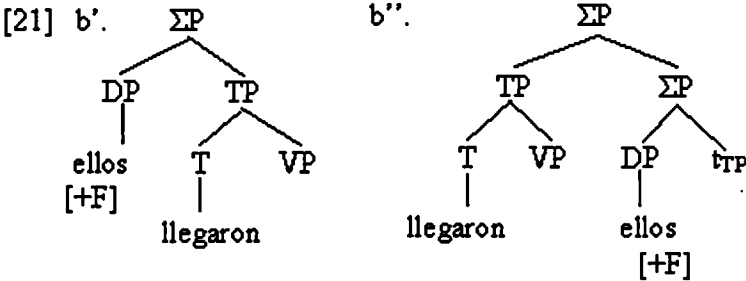
We will show that unaccusative constructions in Romance NS languages results from the same sort of derivation proposed in the previous section for free inversion.

As unaccusative verbs are mono-argumental verbs, their derivation does not differ from that of inergatives.

Taking [21]a, the derivation starts with the pronominal agreement affix as the internal argument of the verb. This pronominal Agr has nominative case and ϕ -features and moves to T to check its nominative feature. This is enough to derive [21] a.

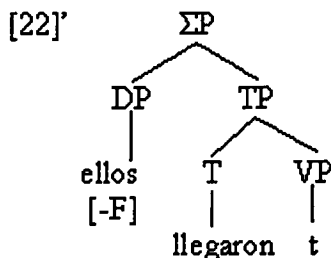


The derivation of [21] b. requires that after [21] b' TP merges with the strong pronoun *ellos* projecting $\Sigma\Pi$. *Ellos* has a [+F] (=focus) feature, TP moves upward to yield a sentence where *ellos* is the rightmost element. The result is a sentence that codifies thetic judgement.



If *ellos* is [-F] no movement is necessary, as what gets stressed is the verb, the rightmost element. The result is the categorical sentence [22], with [22]' as its representation.

[22] Ellos llegaron.



In the theory of ΣP projection we are using here, its Spec is not a case checking position and not restricted to topic-like elements. Both definite and indefinite DPs, as well as specific and non-specific nominals can fill it. If the Nominal is a quantified QP, the pronominal agreement has the status of a bound pronoun. That is the case of [22] d., in which a QP merges with TP and then if QP is [+F], TP moves upward adjoining to ΣP . In all these cases, the DP in Spec of Σ has the *default* nominative case.

This section provided an explanation as to why VS with unaccusative verbs behave as they do, namely why they agree with the postverbal nominal and why definiteness effect is inoperative. They are analyzed as mere cases of free inversion and as such derive this order from the movement of TP to a position above Spec of Σ . Nominals in Spec of Σ have a *default* nominative case, can be definite or indefinite and are interpreted at LF as the subject of the sentence.

BP lost such movement and, therefore, lost free inversion. It exhibits, however, unaccusative VS more like the NS language existentials, namely with the verb no longer holding agreement with the postverbal nominal. In the next section we will analyze existential sentences, first crosslinguistically and then narrowing down to Brazilian Portuguese.

4. Existential constructions

4.1. *Agreement in existential constructions*

Existential sentences and unaccusative VS in non-NS languages like English and French were shown above to be similar constructions. In English both the existential *be* and the unaccusative *arrive* behave alike, agreeing with the postverbal nominal. In French *avoir* and *être* also present the same behavior agreeing with the expletive *il* and not with the expletive associate.

Contrary to the unaccusatives, the existential constructions in NS languages are similar to the French constructions in [4], as there is no agreement between the verb and the postverbal nominal.

French is different from NS languages, however, because, being a non-NS language, it requires, as expected, the expletive *il*. French exhibits another peculiarity absent in NS languages: the locative clitic *y*. English also exhibits a locative-like element: the expletive *there*. If they are locative items, the analyses that claim they have no interpretation at LF has to be reconsidered. This is the line of reasoning followed in this paper following previous work (Nascimento & Kato 1995), which will be discussed in this paper. Before we do so, some controversial aspects of these constructions will be reviewed.

4.2. The case of the postverbal nominal in existentials

The behavior of complements of impersonal constructions with *there*, *il*, and other types of expletives has been intriguing linguists since Perlmutter's (1978) seminal work on this type of verbs. The puzzling points are: a. the possibility or impossibility of assignment of accusative case to these complements, b. their functional status (object or subject) and c. their definiteness restriction.

Nominative has been correlated with definiteness (Belletti 1988), for whom definite NPs are nominative and indefinite NPs may be optionally assigned partitive case. But nominative has also been correlated with agreement (Chomsky 1981, Jaeggli 1982, Borer 1986). Borer argues against the partitive case, showing that indefinite NPs in Hebrew are nominative, agreeing with the verb, and definite NPs are accusative and do not hold agreement with the verb. Following this reasoning, she assumes that the postverbal nominal in French is accusative, since it does not exhibit agreement with the verb.

There-constructions have been receiving special attention in generative work. It motivated a different type of chain – the expletive chain – which resulted from a covert operation of adjunction of the postverbal NP to the expletive, in order to satisfy the case requirements of the former (Chomsky 1986, 1991). The assumption was that the verb *be* was not a case assigner and, therefore, the postverbal nominal was caseless.

Nascimento and Kato (1995), hereafter N&K, also assume that the postverbal nominal is caseless, but their line of reasoning is different. The essential points in N&K are the following:

- a) lexical expletive *there* in English and the clitic *y* in French existentials have a locative semantic content. NS languages have a null locative clitic or expletive;¹²
- b) the existential and unaccusative verbs have a small clause as complement in which the locative is the subject and the NP its predicate.¹³ As a predicate the NP has no case. The locative *there* raises and gets nominative by agreement. In French as the locative is a clitic, it adjoins to INFL and a pure expletive *il* is inserted to satisfy EPP.

- [23] a. There are cats (under the table).
b. Il y a des chats (sous la table).

- [23] a'. [there_i are+T' [_{DP} t_i cats]]
b' [il y_i+a+T' [_{DP} t_i des chats]]

However, N&K's paper does not account for agreement facts in English and in NS languages.¹⁴

- c) if there is a locative PP, it is doubling the *y*-clitic or of the weak *there*.

- [23] a''. [_{IP} there_i are [t_i cats] [under the table].]]
b''. [_{IP} il y_i-a [[_{NP} t_i des chats] [sous la table].]]

Lasnik (1995a) argues against *be* as a non-case-assigner, presenting an alternative analysis using Chomsky's own propositions in the Minimalist frame. He argues that the N feature of T, responsible for nominative checking, is no longer present at LF when the associate adjoins to the expletive. He argues that the strong N feature would

¹² One of the arguments used was that *there* and *it* are not interchangeable.

¹³ Similar ideas are defended in Moro (1991).

¹⁴ We could say, following Lasnik (1995b), that the associate adjoins to the expletive in English to check only the ϕ -features of T, since *there* had already checked its nominative feature. However, quoting Chomsky (1995) Boskowitz (1997) says "whenever the operation Move F affects a formal feature, it carries all formal features of the relevant element and not just one particular feature."(p.93).

have already been checked by the expletive and, therefore, erased. He proposes, instead, that *be* assigns partitive case, following Belletti (1988). He retains the adjunction operation of the associate, not because of the inadequacy of the associate, but due to the inadequacy of the target, the expletive, which has no ϕ -features. So it is only these features that move. In Lasnik's analysis movement benefits the target, which goes against Greed.¹⁵

Lasnik's theory that assigns case is supported by Boskovic's (1997) analysis of infinitival complements of verbs that cannot exceptionally case-mark lexical NPs. He observes the contrast between [24] a. and b:

- [24] a. *He alleged stolen documents to be in the drawer.
b. He alleged there to be stolen documents in the drawer.

If 'stolen documents' in the embedded infinitival clause has no case, and [24] b. is grammatical, then *there* must be licensed by the raising of the FF-features of the associate. If *be* does not assign Case to the associate, there is no explanation for the grammaticality of [24] b. These empirical facts seem to eliminate any theory based on the assumption that *there* has case-features to check and supports the claim that the associate has case.¹⁶ But if *there* cannot check the nominative features of *are+T* in [23a], we have to assume, contra Lasnik, that the associate has nominative case and not partitive and that by raising its formal features (FF) to T the nominative and ϕ -features of *are+T* are eliminated. This is proposed in Chomsky (1995): the verb agrees with the associate if the expletive lacks Case and ϕ -features (*there* in English, *pro* in Italian), but not if the expletive has its own case and ϕ -features (*il* in French). In the case of English, since the expletive has no case and ϕ -features, the features of the verbal complex adjoined to T is checked by the features of the associate. But we are left with the question about *there*: if all features are checked by the FF of the associate, why do we need *there*? It would be only to satisfy EPP, which in normal cases reduces to the checking of N features.

¹⁵ This makes the author propose a relaxed version of Greed called "enlightened self-interest".

¹⁶ However, in order to comply with Greed, Boskowitch proposes that instead of raising the FF features of the associate to benefit the expletive, it is the expletive that lowers, as an affix, in LF.

As *il* (+nominative, +3S) in French checks all the relevant features of the complex *is* +*T*, the case of the associate is understood to have accusative case. Recall that for Borer (1986), it is accusative because it does not exhibit agreement with the verb. Others support this claim (see for instance Roberts, 1987; Nunes, 1990, 1995; Kayne (1993), who claim that the case of the associate depends on the type of auxiliary: the *have*-type of auxiliary would assign/check accusative case.

As for NS languages, Chomsky considers that expletive *pro* does not have its own features. This being the case, the analysis of NS existentials should be the same as that of English, which is not. It is the unaccusatives in NS languages that behave more similarly to existentials and unaccusatives in English. In Chomsky's frame the FF of the associate would adjoin to the expletive *pro*, checking case and ϕ -features with the complex *llegaron* +*T*. The empty expletive *pro* would be necessary for EPP. In our analysis of unaccusative VS in Romance, what happens in LF in English happens before spell-out in NS languages. Instead of raising the abstract FFs, what is raised is the agreement morphology itself. EPP is satisfied, therefore, without projection of Spec of TP, allowing us to eliminate *pro*.

Existentials exhibit more definite restrictions than unaccusatives in general and definiteness was claimed to have bearing on matters of case. In the next section we will see that when existentials admit a definite argument, the case manifested goes against the postulations of case in indefinite or quantified NPs.

4.3. The definiteness effect (DE) and the case of definite postverbal nominals

We saw above that Belletti, who assigns partitive to indefinite associates and nominative to definite arguments, also correlated case with definiteness. Contra Belletti, Borer (1989) says that, in Hebrew, nominative correlates with indefinites and accusative with definite NPs.

Following Higginbotham (1987), Nascimento and Kato (1995) analyzed DE as a property of predicates. Higginbotham assumes that the relation between *there* and the post-copular NP in existentials is predicative. In fact, observe the partial similarity in the three blocks of sentences below:

- [25] a. The boy is a poet.
b. ?The boy is the poet.

- c. The boy is the poet that everybody loved.
 - d. The boy is the best student in my class.
- [26]
- a. Everybody considers the boy a poet.
 - b. *Everybody considers the boy the poet.
 - c. Everybody considers the boy the student that every teacher wants.
 - d. Everybody considers the boy the best poet in the group.
- [27]
- a. There is an actor in the room.
 - b. *There is the actor in the room.
 - c. *There is the actor that everybody loves.
 - d. *There is the best Broadway actor outside.

Though at first sight N&K's theory explains DE in an interesting manner, their analysis is inexplicit concerning aspects of cross-linguistic agreement facts both when the associate is indefinite and when it is definite. However, it will be shown that N&K's ideas are useful in the explanation of the distinct cases manifested when the existential argument is definite or a strong pronoun. Observe the following cross-linguistic contrasts:

- [28]
- a. There is ME.
 - b. Il y a MOI.
 - c. Tem EU.

The case forms that appear in the associate are unexpectedly distinct from what we have been assuming so far, namely nominative or partitive in English and accusative in French.¹⁷ The only correct prediction was for NS languages: nominative case.

¹⁷ These constructions are different from what Lakoff (1987) called deictic existentials, which in Portuguese would be expressed with the copula *estar*.

- (i) There/here 's Harry with his red hat on.
- (ii) Lá/ aqui está Harry com seu chapéu.

Notice that when the existential argument is definite, we have the contrastive *default* case,¹⁸ found by Kato (1999) to be the case of predicates and of left dislocated nominals.

- [29] a. It's ME.
b. C'est MOI.
c. Soy YO.
- [30] a. ME, I prefer a beer.
b. MOI, je préfère une bière.
c. YO, prefiro una cerveza.

If the strong pronoun is coordinated with a DP, the case of the latter must also be the *default*, which implies that if a DP appears alone in these contexts, the case has to be the *default*.

- [31] a. It's JOHN and ME.
b. C'est JEAN et MOI.
c. Somos JUAN y YO.
- [32] a. JOHN and ME, we prefer a beer.
b. JEAN et MOI, nous préférons une bière.
c. JUAN y YO, preferimos una cerveza.

Consider with Kato (1999) that the *default* case is the one manifested by predicates of the equative, or identificational copula. If the equative copula is analyzed as a transitive verb with two arguments as is done by Stowell (1989), we would have exceptionally a case of a transitive verb that does not 'assign' case. She considers instead that equative sentences derive from the copula + small clause like attributive predication. The difference would be in the fact that in the latter the subject of the SC is in Spec of the SC and in the former the subject is adjoined to a maximal projection.

¹⁸ See also Nunes (forth) who, with independent arguments, analyzes the accusative as the *default* case in English

- [33] a. He is John.
b. [is+T [_{DP} He [_{DP} John]]]

- [34] a. He is a poet.
b. [is+T [_{DP} He [_{DP} a poet?]]]

In [33] as both **he** and **John** are maximal projections, there is no Spec-head agreement. **He**, which is nominative and 3pS, raises to check the same Case and ϕ -features of *is+T* eliminating them. As a predicate, **John** is exempt from the Case filter, but it manifests the *default* case. Structural nominative case has always been linked to agreement. As can be seen below, the *default* case is independent of agreement.¹⁹

- [35] a. It is HIM.
b. It is THEM.

- [36] a. C'est MOI.
b. C'est NOUS.

In [34] **he** and **a poet** are in Spec-head relation. Though **a poet** does not require case because it is not an argument, it has uninterpretable case and ϕ -features. We can say that checking of these features occurs when **he** and **a poet** are merged, without need of movement.²⁰ Checking eliminates the features of *a poet*, which are non-interpretable. **He**, which has the [+interpretable] features, then raises to check case and ϕ -features in the main clause.²¹

What the examples of existentials with definite arguments show is that raising the FFs of the postverbal DP cannot check the case and ϕ -features of the copula. In English, the *default* case is accusative and therefore it would not check the nominative feature of copula+T. In NS languages the *default* case of the DP is nominative. As nominative implies agreement, if the FF of the DP is raised, we would expect agreement, but no agreement is exhibited. In French the *default* case is dative. Moreover, a real expletive *il* appears to check nominative and ϕ -features of

¹⁹ I thank Hagit Borer for pointing out this fact to me.

²⁰ We could say that nominal gender and number agreement could occur in the same fashion.

²¹ According to Chomsky (1995) [+interpretable] features can enter into more than one operation of checking, and can also remain unchecked.

the *copula+T*. Thus, the analysis provided for indefinite existentials does not work for definite existentials.

The analysis that we propose here follows N&K initial assumption that *there* and *y* are weak locative pronouns instead of expletives and that NS languages have a null locative (\emptyset -loc). Here we propose, in addition, that for definite existentials the three types of languages have the same type of derivation:

Let us start with N&K's proposal that existentials derive from a copula taking a small clause complement, which would have the adjunction structure of an equative predication. Thus, for definite existentials in [28], repeated here as [37] we have the derivation shown below:

- [37] a. There is ME.
 b. Il y a MOI.
 c. Tem EU.

- [37] a'. [is +T [_{DP} [_{DP}there] [_{DP}ME]]]
 b'. [a+T [_{DP} [_{DP}y] [_{DP}MOI]]]
 c'. [tem+T [_{DP} [_{DP} \emptyset -loc] [_{DP}EU]]]

What is proposed now is that the locative elements are all clitics and adjoin to T.²²

- [37] a''. [there+is +T [_{DP} t_{there} [ME]]]
 b''. [y+ a+T [_{DP} t_y [MOI]]]
 c''. [\emptyset -loc+tem+T [_{DP} t _{\emptyset} [EU]]]

In order to check the nominative feature and the 3pS features of the complex in T, an expletive is inserted: *il* in French and *pro* in English and the NS languages. In English *pro* is actually the expletive *it*, which like the expletive *es* in German can be null

²² Chomsky (1993), Lasnik (1995a) consider *there* an affix at LF. Though their arguments to propose this are different and mine is different from theirs, there is a common ground: that there is morphologically dependent: an affix for them, a clitic for me.

when the V2 pattern is met. Since phonologically there occupies position 1, it is erased at spell-out.²³ Other contexts where the expletive is erased are:

- [38] a. That he came is true.
 b. Under the bed is the best place for it.

In NS languages, *pro* is simply the zero-agreement of third person singular. When the subject is referential the agreement morphemes merge as arguments. In the expletive case, merge is assumed to occur for checking purposes only and therefore occurs at TP.

- [37] a'''[(it) [there+is +T [_{DP} t_{there} [ME]]]
 b'''[il. [y+ a+T [_{DP} t_y [MOI]]]
 c'''.[-Ø [Ø-loc+tem+T [_{DP} t_Ø [EU]]]

4.4. *The indefinite existentials*

We will assume, as in the previous section, that *there* and *y* are locative clitics, and that NS languages have a null locative clitic. In the definite existentials these locatives were adjoined to a maximal projection, and, therefore, they were minimal and maximal. Contrary to N&K, who propose for indefinite existential a SC with the DP as the predicate, what we propose here is that locatives are D heads and the postverbal nominals start as their internal argument. Thus, in an unorthodox manner, we are saying that definite DPs are predicates (of equative sentences) and that indefinite nominals are internal arguments of a locative predicate. The logical reason why the indefinite nominal is rejected as the predicate is in the fact that these nominals can be quantified, what is not allowed in predicates.

- [39] a. There are some good TV guides.
 b. *?They are some good TV guides.
 c. *I consider them some good TV guides.

²³ We may assume that since the expletive has no referential role, its features can be erased after checking.

If they are not predicates, they must be arguments. We claim that they are complements of a category D (=locative). Following the trend, we can say that auxiliaries assign case, that the have -type assigns accusative, and the be-type the nominative.

- [40] a. [are+T [DP there [NP cats _[+nom]]]
 b. [a+T [DP y [NP des chats _[+accus]]]
 c. [hay+T [DP Ø-loc [NP gatos _[+accus]]]]

The locatives cliticize to copula+T, possibly to check the locative features of the existential auxiliary. The infinitival existential complement of *wager/allege*-type verbs does not need any further operation after the raising of the locative *there* to T as *be* has no features to check. *There* in [41]b' underwent head movement like in [40] a. The slot that it occupies is not the same as that of DP in [41]a., which explains why [41]a is ungrammatical and b is not.

- [41] a. *He alleged stolen documents to be in the drawer.
 b. He alleged there to be stolen documents in the drawer.

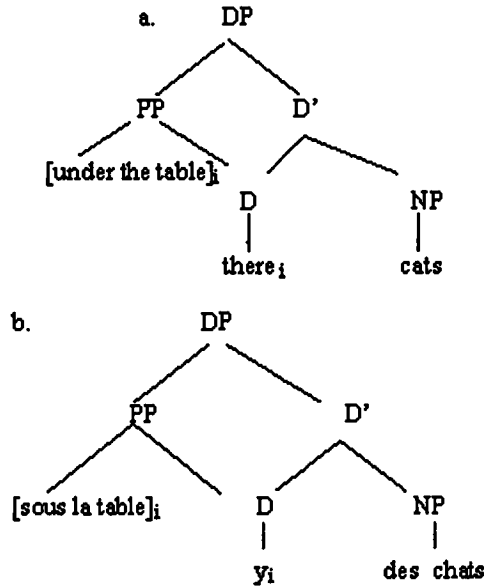
- [41] a' He alleged [TP stolen documents [T to [VP be [DP there {stolen documents in the drawer} _[+nom]]]]]
 b' He alleged [TP [T there + to [VP be [DP there {stolen documents in the drawer} _[+nom]]]]]

French and the NS languages cannot move the associate because its case-feature is accusative. They have to use an item from the numeration to check the features in copula+ : the item is *il* in French and the agreement suffix -Ø for the NS languages. English, on the other hand, can move 'cats' because it has nominative and the proper f features to check.²⁴

- [42] a. [TP cats _[+nom,+φ] [there+are+T [DP there [NP cats]]
 b. [TP il _[+nom,+φ] [y+a+T [DP y [des chats]]]
 c. [TP Ø _[+nom,+φ] + Ø-loc+ hay+T [DP Ø-loc [gatos]]]

²⁴ We are using Nunes (1995) copy theory of movement, according to which Move is not a single operation. It consists of four operations: Copy, Merge, Form Chain and Chain Reduction.

[43]



If PP has [+F] feature, it may stay *in-situ* after everything raises. If it has no focal features, it raises to Spec of Σ .

5. Conclusion

This paper showed that, with the loss of VS constructions, BP unaccusative VS was reanalyzed as an existential construction. The paper has also shown that there are two types of existentials: a) the existentials with a definite argument and b) the existentials with an indefinite argument. Different analyses were proposed for the two types. In the latter, Case was claimed to be assigned by the auxiliary – nominative by *be*- and accusative by *have*-type auxiliary. Existential verbs were claimed to have a small clause complement. The SC in the definite existential is claimed to be an equative predication clause where the locative element (*there*, *y*, \emptyset) is the predicate and the nominal its subject, with a *default* case. The indefinite existential was also claimed to have a SC as complement, but the locative is analyzed as the predicate and the associate its subject, assigned Case by the auxiliary.

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