

On the Interpretation of *there* in Existentials

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1. Introduction*

In this paper, we would like to show that a large number of properties of existential sentences which have been noted in the pragmatic literature (Ward & Birner 1995 and references cited therein), can be derived from the syntactic configuration generated by the presence of *there*. We claim that existential *there* makes three syntactic and semantic contributions to a sentence, as listed in (1):

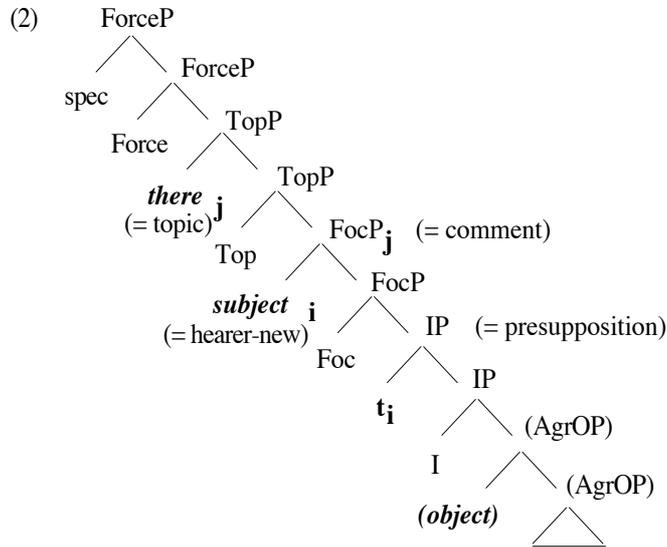
- (1) I. *There* is a topic, base-generated in spec,TopP;
- II. *There* denotes a relation between a hearer-new part and a hearer-old whole.
- III. *There* is a proform of the complement of Top, i.e. FocP. It forces FocP to be interpreted as a relation between a hearer-new part and a hearer-old whole. Put differently, FocP is an instantiation of the relation denoted by *there*.

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The structure of the paper is as follows. We will first go into some background assumptions with respect to the syntactic configuration and principles involved in *there* sentences (section 2), before evaluating the empirical consequences of this proposal in section 3. In this section, the so-called ‘definiteness restriction’ on the subject in *there* sentences will be shown to follow from properties of FocP. Various well known restrictions on the predicate in *there* sentences will be related to the part-whole relation forced by *there*. Finally, we present some curious new data involving restrictions on extraction from *there*-sentences, which will be elegantly derived from Chomsky’s (1995) Minimal Link Condition. In section 4, we investigate further consequences of our analysis for the distribution of *there*, and for the impossibility of topical object preposing in Dutch.

2. Assumptions

Following Rizzi (1995), we assume a layered structure for the left edge of CP as in (2). The reader is referred to Rizzi (1995) for motivation of the relative order of ForceP, TopP and FocP. We assume that a constituent in specTopP is interpreted as hearer-old information. *There* is base-generated in SpecTopP. It involves old information, as is also evidenced by the fact that it is phonologically destressed. *There* is coindexed with the complement of Top: FocP. FocP should thus be viewed as the associate of *there*. The (indefinite) subject of *there*-sentences receives case in SpecIP position (see also Lasnik 1995). We assume that a constituent in specFocP is interpreted as hearer-new information. The subject moves from SpecIP to SpecFocP position, and is interpreted as hearer-new information. This configuration requires that the verb move up to Top position in *there* sentences.



In addition to the assumptions spelled out in (2), we assume (an informal version of) Chomsky’s (1995) Minimal Link Condition, stating that no more than one spec-position can be skipped. The idea that SpecFocP is associated with hearer-new information and SpecTopP with hearer-old information has a corollary: the opposite information values of SpecTopP and SpecFocP entail that a constituent cannot move from SpecFocP to SpecTopP, since this would provide such a constituent with a contradictory information status.

3. Consequences

3.1 Conditions on the subject

Let us first evaluate the consequences of the representation in (2) with respect to the properties of the subject. Since Milsark (1974), it is well known that the subject in *there* sentences displays a so-called Definiteness effect. This term is however quite misleading, since at least some definites can actually occur as the subject of *there* sentences, as shown in (3) (Milsark 1974, Rando & Napoli 1978, Reed 1982, Ward & Birner 1995). The contrast in (3cd) shows that definite DPs which can only be interpreted as ‘hearer-old’ topics such as the pronouns *het* and *it*, cannot appear as subjects in *there*-sentences.

- (3)
- a Er is ook nog JAN
 - b There’s also John
 - c Er is ook nog DIT/*het
 - d There is also THIS/*it

- e Er staan de mooiste bloemen in de tuin
 I. ‘There are very nice flowers in the garden’
 II. # ‘The most beautiful (of a given set of) flowers are in the garden’
- f Er staan veel bloemen in de tuin
 I. ‘There are many flowers in the garden’
 II. # ‘Many of the flowers are in the garden’

We would like to explore the idea that the so-called Definiteness effect is not a consequence of partitive case-assignment (Belletti 1988), but of the configurationally determined ‘hearer-new’ information status of the subject in *there* sentences. The idea that the subject in SpecFocP must be interpreted as hearer-new can explain both the preference for indefinite subjects and the conditions determining the appearance of definite subjects in *there*-sentences.

Putting information-status aside, the difference between definite and indefinite DPs is that definite DPs are identifiable, while indefinite DPs are not: i.e. the identity of indefinite DPs cannot be ascertained (Ward & Birner 1995). Placing a definite DP in SpecFocP, where it configurationally receives ‘hearer-new’ information status, gives rise to a potential conflict, since identifiable DPs are ‘hearer-old’ in the unmarked case. For definite DPs to appear in SpecFocP, this potential conflict must be solved by the context. One way to solve this conflict involves an interpretation by which definite, i.e. identifiable DPs, are nevertheless presented as new. This is the case in the ‘forget’ context which licenses the definite subject in (2abc): the subject, though identifiable by virtue of its definiteness, is nevertheless interpretable as new information via the ‘forget’ context. As Ward & Birner (1995) note, the ‘forget’ context is just one of several possibilities for solving this conflict.

The interpretation of the superlative subject in (3e) can be explained in a similar way. The subject in (3e) only has an absolute superlative interpretation, and not the expected relative superlative interpretation. In our view, this can be explained as follows. The relative superlative interpretation is partitive and requires a given, i.e. identifiable set of flowers. The presence of the subject in the configurationally ‘hearer-new’ SpecFocP precludes an interpretation of the DP as identifiable. As a result, the only remaining interpretation for the DP in (3e) is the absolute superlative interpretation which does not require reference to an identifiable set. A similar analysis holds for the absolute and relative interpretation of *veel* ‘many’ in (3f).

This analysis has a number of consequences for the position of the subject in sentences without *there*. We argue that subjects in such sentences usually occupy the position that *there* occupies in (2). The contrast between *there*- and *there*-less sentences can be represented as follows:

- (4) a. [TopP there are [FocP [these people]_i [IP t_i in the garden]]]
 b. [TopP [these people]_i are [FocP ____ [IP t_i in the garden]]]

In other words, subjects move from SpecIP to SpecTopP, skipping SpecFocP in accordance with the Minimal Link Condition. As a result, subjects acquire hearer-old status and avoid the hearer-new status associated with SpecFocP. With respect to (5ab), the effects of (3) can now be observed in reverse: the relative superlative interpretation is required, because the DP in SpecTopP must be interpreted as hearer-old information. The same partitive interpretation applies to (5b).¹

- (5) a De mooiste bloemen staan in de tuin
 the nicest flowers are in the garden
 I. # 'There are very nice flowers in the garden'
 II. 'The most beautiful (of a given set of) flowers are in the garden'
- b Veel bloemen staan in de tuin
 I. # 'There are many flowers in the garden'
 II. 'Many of the flowers are in the garden'
- c Een plant staat *(doorgaans) in de tuin
 a plant is usually in the garden

The sentence (5c) represents an interesting case. An indefinite DP subject in SpecTopP gives rise to a potential conflict: indefiniteness usually corresponds to unidentifiability, whereas SpecTopP configurationally endows a constituent with 'hearer-old' information status. The properties of unidentifiability and 'hearer-old' information status are difficult to reconcile, and create a potential interpretive conflict. This conflict can however be solved through a generic interpretation for the sentence, which is one way of allowing unidentifiable indefinites to be interpreted as 'hearer-old'. In terms of configurational information requirements, the case in (5c) can be considered the mirror image of the definiteness constraint in (3).

The analysis presented here relies heavily on the idea that constituents acquire part of their interpretation by movement, in this case, their information status. This is not an uncommon view. It can be found in Diesing's (1992) work on the interpretation of indefinites, and in Bennis' (1995), Postma's (1995) work on the Dutch *Wh*- word *wat* 'what', whose interpretation as an indefinite or as a *Wh*- NP varies with its configurational position, as illustrated in (6-7).

¹ As Helen de Hoop (p.c.) correctly observes, the absolute interpretation of the superlative in (5a) and the absolute interpretation of *veel* 'many' in (5b) are available, provided that the superlative and *veel* 'many' are stressed. We take this marked intonation pattern to indicate that the subject is interpreted in a position lower than its surface position (cf. similar effects in *ALL people didn't call*, where *all* takes narrow scope with respect to negation). More specifically, we take the subject to be interpreted in SpecFocP in these cases. Alternatively, we could assume that there is no TopP in such cases.

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|---|
| (6) | Jan at wat
John ate what
I. 'John ate something'
II. #'What did John eat' | (7) | Wat at Jan
what ate John
I. # 'John ate something'
II. 'What did John eat' |
|-----|--|-----|---|

With respect to alternative analyses of *there* sentences, it is important to point out that our analysis both precludes an approach in terms of covert subject raising and an analysis in terms of feature raising (Chomsky 1995). Adapting the analysis developed here in terms of a feature-based framework for movement, raising of a 'hearer-old' feature to *there* would erroneously predict that subjects could be 'hearer-old' when in a position lower than SpecTopP. By contrast, in our analysis, subjects can only acquire a 'hearer-old' or 'hearer-new' interpretation through overt movement to the position where this interpretation is assigned.

3.2 Conditions on the predicate

In addition to the restrictions on the subject, *there*-sentences also involve restrictions on the predicate. We have assumed that *there* is a proform of FocP, and that it denotes a relation between a hearer-new part and a hearer-old whole (cf. 1.II). It follows that FocP must denote a relation between a hearer-new part and a hearer-old whole (cf. 1.III).

Before developing the consequences of this view, we would like to present some initial evidence that a part-whole interpretation of *there* is necessary. The new-part-of-old-whole analysis makes it possible to present a unified analysis of Dutch 'expletive' *er* 'there' and quantitative *er* 'of-it'. In (8), quantitative *er* can be taken to represent a relation between 'hearer-old' sharks and the 'hearer-new' ones seen by me.

- (8) Over haaien gesproken, ik heb er (twee) gezien
talking about sharks, I have there two seen

Since quantitative *er* requires a part-whole analysis, the null hypothesis is that existential *er* 'there' also has such an interpretation.

We then have to investigate how this part-whole relation of *er*, and, by extension, *there*, would surface in the context of existentials where *er* is coindexed with a FocP as in (2), rather than with an NP as in (8). It is our contention that the part-whole relation of *there* in existentials is realized on the FocP it is coindexed with, and more in particular on the predicate contained in this FocP.

The effects of this relation can be observed in the well-known restriction of the predicates in *there*-sentences to stage-level and nonstative predicates, as illustrated in (9) and (10) (Milsark 1974):

- (9) a Er is een student beschikbaar/*intelligent
b There is a student available/*intelligent

- (12) a *There was a basketball player tall
 b *A basketball player was tall

However, the contrast in (13) shows that this cannot be quite true: while (13a) can be improved by a generic interpretation (cf. *supra*), (13b) cannot.

- (13) a A basketball player *(usually) was tall in those days
 b *There was (usually) a basketball player tall in those days

The analysis advocated here provides two distinct explanations for the sentences in (13ab). The sentence (13a) is ungrammatical without a generic interpretation because an unidentifiable indefinite DP is in the ‘hearer-old’ SpecTopP. The sentence (13b), by contrast, is ruled out because *tall* is an individual level-predicate, precluding a part-whole relation.

3.3 Conditions on extraction from *there*-sentences

In this section, we turn to the predictions of the structure in (2) with respect to extraction from *there*-sentences. A crucial property of this structure is that it involves three subsequent filled Specifier positions: *there* in SpecTopP, the subject in SpecFocP, and the trace of the subject in SpecIP. Let us now suppose, following Rizzi (1995), that movement proceeds via Specifier positions only, and assume Chomsky’s (1995) Minimal Link Condition. Under these conditions, the predictions made by the structure in (2) are as follows.³

First of all, everything dominated by IP is trapped, and cannot be extracted. SC-predicates, low adverbials such as manner adverbs, and objects in transitive expletive constructions (TECs) cannot be preposed, regardless of their information status. This is so because in the structure for *there*-sentences in (2), preposing would involve movement of a constituent to SpecForceP, skipping three filled Specifier positions and thus violating the Minimal Link Condition. The correctness of this prediction can be evaluated in (14) through (16):

- (14) **Small clause predicates**
 a *[_{PP} In de sloot/*slechts in EEN sloot]_i is er iemand _{t_i}
 gesprongen
 in the ditch/only in one ditch is there someone jumped

³ As the reader will notice below, we take SpecForceP to be the only landing site for *Wh*-elements and a possible landing site for Focused constituents. Here our assumptions diverge from Rizzi’s (1995). The reason is that languages such as Dutch show ordering restrictions in the extended CP domain that differ from those in Italian, but that are nevertheless compatible with the ordering of functional projections proposed by Rizzi (1995). A second difference between Rizzi’s proposal and ours is that Rizzi (1995) allows for recursion of TopP below FocP. This low TopP does not seem to be available in Dutch, and can be shown to be immaterial for the argument in the main text.

- b *<sub>[PP Op de tafel/*slechts op EEN tafel]_i heeft er iemand
 ‘n kop *t_i* gezet
 on the table/only on one table has there someone a cup put</sub>
- c _{[PP Op de tafel]_i heeft Jan een kopje *t_i* gezet}

(15) **Low adverbials**

- a *PERFECT_i heeft er iemand dat probleem *t_i* opgelost
 perfectly has there someone that problem solved
- b PERFECT_i heeft Jan dat probleem *t_i* opgelost
 perfectly has John that problem solved

(16) **Objects in TECs⁴**

- a *<sub>[DP Hoeveel boeken/wat/dat boek]_i heeft er iemand *t_i*
 meegenomen?
 how many books/what/this book has there someone taken</sub>
- b Er heeft iemand drie boeken/dat boek meegenomen
 there has someone three books/that book taken
- c Drie boeken/dat/dit boek/*het heeft Piet meegenomen
 three books/that/this book/*it has Pete taken

The sentences (14c), (15b) and (16c) show that *there*-less sentences do not exhibit these restrictions on preposing. Movement to SpecForceP in these cases complies with the Minimal Link Condition, since no more than one Specifier, that involving the subject, needs to be skipped.

A second prediction of our assumptions is that the subject, and high adverbials that can be base-generated as adjuncts to FocP, can prepose by moving to SpecForceP. This is so because they only have to skip SpecTopP, in compliance with the Minimal Link Condition. This can be verified in (17abd) and (18ad):

(17) **Subjects**

- a [_{ForceP} [Hoeveel mensen]_i vroegen [_{TopP} er *t_i* om geld?]]
- b [_{ForceP} [Maar TWEE mensen]_i hebben [_{TopP} er *t_i* om geld

⁴ Olaf Koeneman (p.c.) mentions the following potential counterexample to our generalization that objects in TECs cannot be preposed:

i. Welk boek heeft er nou NIEMAND gelezen?
 ‘which book has there now nobody read’

Koeneman (p.c.) also points out that this construction involves additional restrictions which are not a general property of TECs. First of all, sentences such as (i) require the presence of modal-like elements such as the particle *nou* or the (affirmative) adverbial *altijd wel*. Secondly, the subject must be negative and focused, as shown in (ii):

ii. *Welk boek heeft er nou IEMAND/ een jongen gelezen?
 ‘which book has there now nobody/ a boy read’

The complex interaction of conditions licensing sentences such as (i) makes it unclear whether the sentence in (i) falsifies our generalization. We will leave this problem for further research.

- gevraagd]]
 only two people have there for money asked
- c *_{[ForceP Zij hebben [TopP er om geld gevraagd]]}
 they have there for money asked
- d _{[ForceP [How many people] were [TopP there asking you for money today]]}
- e *_{[ForceP [Who] is [TopP there asking you for money]]}
- (18) **High adjuncts**
- a _{[FceP [pp Slechts in één kamer] heeft [TopP er iemand gebeld]]}
 only in one room has there someone called
- b *_{[ForceP [pp In de kamer] heeft [TopP er iemand gebeld]]}
 In the room has there someone called
- c *_{[ForceP [pp Daar] heeft [TopP er iemand gebeld]]}
 there has there someone called
- d _{[pp In de kamer/daar] heeft Piet gebeld}
 in the room/there has Pete called

However, movement of subjects and high adverbials is subject to a condition involving their information status. Only ‘hearer-new’ (non D-linked) subjects and adjuncts can prepose, because they proceed via or originate in FocP and must skip SpecTopP, the position where a constituent is identified as ‘hearer-old’ information. The contrast between the successfully preposed ‘hearer new’ subjects in (17ab) and the unfavorably preposed ‘hearer old’ subject in (17c), as well as the difference between the felicitous ‘hearer new’ preposed PP in (18a) and the unfavorable ‘hearer old’ preposed PPs in (18bc), show that this prediction is correct.

It is important to point out that the analysis outlined here makes more accurate predictions with respect to extraction out of *there*-sentences than that presented in Belvin & den Dikken (1997). Belvin & den Dikken (1997) propose an analysis of *there*-sentences in which the entire sentence is generated in the specifier of a projection containing *there*. They then proceed to derive the restrictions on extraction from *there*-sentences from the general ban on extraction from left branches. This predicts however that no extraction at all should be possible out of *there*-sentences, contrary to fact.

By contrast, the analysis outlined here makes a fine-grained distinction between extractions that are excluded by a strong structural condition such as the Minimal Link Condition (SC-predicates, manner adverbials, TEC objects); and extractions that are allowed by the Minimal Link Condition, but constrained by the properties of the positions available for movement *in casu* the (‘hearer-new’) information-status associated with SpecFocP (subjects, high adjuncts).

4. Further consequences

The data in (21bc) support the labeling and bracketing in (21a). As we have shown, reduced subject and object pronouns must license their interpretation by overt movement to SpecTopP. The presence of the adjunct in SpecTopP blocks movement to SpecTopP, hence these reduced pronouns cannot be licensed.⁵

4.2 *There* and the associate status of FocP

We have taken the position that *there* in existential constructions is not an expletive, but makes the semantic contributions outlined in (1). Moreover, *there* is coindexed with the complement of Top, FocP. In this way, existential *there* strongly resembles expletive *it* in (22) for which Moro (1991) and Rooryck (1997) have also proposed a nonexpletive analysis.

- (22) a It seems that John will come
 b The situation at hand (= it) resembles a typical situation in which John will come.

For Moro (1991) and Rooryck (1997), *it* in (22b) is a pro-CP coindexed with the CP complement of *seem*. Rooryck (1997) makes this relation more explicit by providing a semantic rationale for the relation between pro-CP *it* and the CP complement of *seem* along the lines of (22b): *seem* in (22a) expresses a relation of resemblance between a token situation expressed by *it* and a type-interpreted CP.

The question now arises as to the difference between *there* and *it*. The sentences in (23-24) show that *there* and *it* are in complementary distribution.

- (23) a Het/*er schijnt [_{CP} dat Jan zal komen]
 b It/*there seems [_{CP} that John will come]
 (24) a Er/*het schijnt [_{FocP} iemand te komen]
 b There/*it seems [_{FocP} to come someone]

In our view, this is because *there* and *it* make different syntactic and semantic contributions to the sentence. Pro-CP *it* and CP denote situations, while *there* is a proform for FocP and denotes a part-whole relation.

Comparing pro-CP *it* and pro-FocP *there* also raises another question. The traditional expletive analysis for (22) raises the problem of why the CP cannot move into the position of the expletive, yielding sentences such as (24b).

⁵ Sentences containing both a reduced subject and a reduced object pronoun at first sight would require two SpecTopPs to be licensed, contrary to our assumptions here. However, we propose that such sentences must be analysed as involving cliticization of the object pronoun to the verb before movement of this cluster to Top.

- (25) a It seems [_{CP} that John came]
 b * [_{CP} That John came] seems t_{CP}

Rooryck (1997) solves this problem by assuming that *it* is a token of the situation-type denoted by CP, and that both *it* and CP are necessary because *seem* establishes a resemblance relation between token and type.

The question now likewise arises why FocP cannot move into the position of *there*, SpecTopP. In other words, why is *there* necessary?

- (26) a There came a man into my room
 b * [_{TopP} [_{FocP} a man t_i into my room]_j [_{Top} came_i t_j]]

Within the analysis developed here, the answer to this question is straightforward. FocP denotes ‘hearer-new’ information. As such, it cannot be moved into in a ‘hearer-old’ SpecTopP, since that would provide FocP with contradictory information status.

4.3 *There* and IP: Case, agreement, stylistic inversion

One of the advantages of the analysis presented here is that it requires no special mechanism for (partitive) case assignment to the subject in English and Dutch. Nominative Case and subject agreement are licensed in SpecIP. The configuration in (2) also accounts for the fact that V in Top has scope over subject in SpecIP, and that the subject cannot bind into a PP lower than *there*, but higher than the subject at surface structure as in **There seem to each other_i to be some of the applicants_j eligible for the job* (Lasnik 1992, attributed to L. Davis; den Dikken 1995).

The analysis is however left with a problem with respect to agreement and Case in raising contexts. As can be observed in (27), agreement in raising structures is with the subject in the embedded clause:

- (27) [_{TopP} There [_{IP1} seem [_{IP2} to be students in the garden]]]

In the analysis presented here, this is quite unexpected, since the subject *students* remains in the embedded clause, agreeing with the local I, and not with the matrix I. As a result, our analysis would predict that there is no way to ensure plural agreement on the matrix verb *seem*, since the subject does not raise to the extended projection of the matrix *seem* at any point in the derivation. Correspondingly, the embedded infinitival I does not assign Case to the subject, and the configuration does not allow Case to be assigned by *seem*. Under a feature-movement analysis, agreement with and case-assignment by *seem* are straightforward.

The solution we propose for this problem is as follows. First of all, we take sentences with raising verbs followed by an infinitival complement to involve a monoclausal structure, in line with ideas proposed by Cinque (1997). Secondly, we follow Barbiers (1998) in assuming that

English and Dutch are underlyingly SOV, and that the different surface positions of the verbs in these languages are the result of a difference in spell-out, as indicated in (28).

- (28) a That [_{TopP} there [seem to be] [_{FocP} students
[_{IP} students ~~{seem to be}~~ [_{VP} in the garden {seem to be}]]]]]
b Dat [_{TopP} er ~~{lijken te zijn}~~] [_{FocP} studenten
[_{IP} ~~studenten~~ ~~{lijken te zijn}~~ [_{VP} in de tuin [lijken te zijn]]]]]]

The agreement and Case properties in raising structures now follow in the same way as for the cases discussed above: case on the subject and agreement on the verb are licensed in IP.

A final issue brought up by our analysis concerns the configurational status of IP as the presuppositional complement of Foc in (2). This implies that IP can move to SpecTopP. There seems to be evidence that this is indeed the case. Stylistic Inversion is analyzed by Rochemont & Culicover (1990) as preposing of a remnant VP. In our analysis, this proposal can be advantageously reformulated as involving movement to SpecTopP of a remnant IP as in (29).

- (29) [_{TopP} [_{IP} Into the room nude] _j] [_{Top} walked_i] [_{FocP} a man
no one knew [_{Foc} _{t_i} _{t_j}]]]]]

The advantage of our analysis is that it explicitly captures the information status of the different constituents. The IP acquires ‘hearer-old’ status, while the subject represents the only new information in (29).

Given that Case of the subject is licensed in SpecIP in *there*-sentences, SpecFocP should in principle be available for constituents other than the subject. The presentational *there* construction seems to be a case in point (Rochemont & Culicover 1990: 29(52ab))

- (30) a [_{TopP} There walked [_{FocP} [_{IP} into the room] [_{IP} the one man
she had no desire to see _{t_{IP}}]]]
b * There was the one man she had no desire to see in the room.

In (30a), a segment of IP moves into SpecFocP, stranding the subject in SpecIP. We have already assumed (cf supra) that IP can be identified with the subject, since IP equals AGR_SP/ TP, and AGR_SP has the phi-features of the subject. As a result, movement of the segment of IP is formally equivalent to movement of the subject, but yields slightly different information status results. More specifically, this correctly predicts that the definiteness restriction on the subject is relaxed when the segment of IP moves to SpecFocP. Recall that we derive the definiteness restriction from our assumption that the subject acquires ‘hearer-new’ status in SpecFocP. Since

the subject remains in SpecIP in (30), it does not receive the 'hearer-new' information status hence need not be indefinite. As (30b) shows this prediction is correct.

5. Conclusion

The results of our analysis can be summed up as follows:

1. The so-called definiteness restriction on the subject in *there*-sentences, and apparent exceptions to this restriction follow from our assumption that the subject always moves to SpecFocP where it is identified as 'hearer-new' information.
2. The 'individual-level/ stative' restriction on the predicate in *there*-sentences can be derived from the part-whole relation imposed by *there*. Apparent exceptions involving Focus on an indefinite quantifier within the subject corroborate this idea.
3. The analysis makes a fine-grained distinction between extractions from *there*-sentences that are excluded by the Minimal Link Condition (SC-predicates, manner adverbials, TEC objects), and extractions allowed by the Minimal Link Condition that are only possible for constituents with a 'hearer-new' information status.
4. *There* is not an expletive, but a pro-form of FocP, and thus similar to the CP pro-form *it* in *seem* contexts.

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