

Multiple Subjects in Expletive *There* Construction

存在文における多重主語について

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The associate noun phrase in the expletive *there* construction moves away from its original D-Structure position (the multiple subject construction). This construction is interesting in two respects. Languages differ in their ability to allow this construction, and thus we can obtain an insight into language typology. The possible landing site of this associate NP necessitates [Spec,TP], hence this construction offers empirical support for this projection TP.

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1. Introduction.

The expletive *there* construction contains two kinds of subjects, that is, *there* and its associate noun phrase. Let us assume the D Structure of this construction to be of the form in (1). In some languages the associate NP moves away from its original D Structure position [Spec,VP]. Thus in Icelandic example (1) the associate NP *many monkeys* moves away from its original position to [Spec,TP], finally resulting in the structure in (2) (J.D. Bobaljik and Dianne Jonas 1996:227).

(1) [AgrP there [TP [AgrP [VP many monkeys ate the bananas]]]]

(2) [AgrP there ate [TP many monkeys [AgrP the bananas [VP]]]]

Chomsky (1995:342) calls this kind of subject shift in expletive *there* constructions multiple-subject constructions (MSCs). The MSCs are interesting both factually and theoretically. Some languages allow MSCs and others do not. Thus see the following table (3).

(3)

	verb raising	subject shift (in <i>there</i> constr.)	object shift
Icelandic	yes	yes	yes
Modern English	no	no	no
Middle English	yes	yes	no

(only negative subjects)

J. D. Bobaljik and Dianne Jonas (1996:222) claim that if a language allows [Spec,TP] at S-Structure, then a subject may move to this position (subject shift). According to them, both the subject shift and overt verb raising are necessary conditions for the object NP to move to [Spec,AgrP] (object shift) without violating the condition of Shortest Movement (Ibid. :198-203).

The theoretical interest of the MSCs lies in the fact that they empirically justify one of the possible Spec positions of the functional categories, that is, [Spec,TP]. If Bobaljik and Jonas are correct, the subject can move overtly only to [Spec,TP] and nowhere else in the MSCs. Ever since Pollock (1989) decomposed Infle into [TP [NegP [AgrP [VP]]]] (the so called Split Infle Hypothesis), we have seen various inflectional morphemes realized as the head of

a functional projection, such as Tense, Agreement, Aspect, Negation, etc., each of which takes its own Spec (Dobrovie-Sorin 1993:VXII), sometimes without much factual support. Functional categories should be established with sufficient empirical justification. The MSCs justify at least [Spec,TP].

2. MSCs in Late Middle English

In this section I observe some interesting facts about the subject shift of the expletive *there* construction in *the Paston Letters* (PL)¹. In Old and Middle English verbs raised overtly from VP to Tense. This is why the following sentences were allowed in PL if we assume adverbs *so* and *sore* to occur in VP-initial position.

(4) Thei threte (=threat) so my men that I dar (=dare) send non (=none) theder (=thither) to gadere (=gather) it. Thei stufte and vetaylle sore the place², (217010-11)³

As for the object shift, the object in the following (5) and (6) apparently shifts leftward from its original VP-internal position.

(5) And to encomfort yow, dy [s] peyre yow not fore lak of vytayle ner of gonne-powdre, (243039)

'And to encourage you, despair you not for lack of victual nor of gunpowder'

(6) yif ye any thyng doo in this mater (908011)

'if you do anything in this matter'

(7) we can non geete (618027)

'we can get none.'

Notice that the shifted objects in the above examples are pronouns or indefinite NPs. The shifted object in Icelandic is typically a lexical definite NP. In addition Bobaljik and Jonas (Ibid:206-7) point out

that "pronouns shift" should be analyzed as a process of head movement or cliticization, not as an instance of OS.

How about the subject shift in the expletive *there* construction in PL? We observe sporadic examples like (9), which resemble Icelandic transitive expletive constructions in the form (8).

(8) there ate many trolls the sausages. (Icelandic)

(9) And ther knoweth no man how soon God woll clepe (= call) hym, (030011-2)

MSCs in PL in general have the following properties.

(10) a. The associate noun phrases used in this construction are negative noun phrases which are modified with an inherently negative quantifier *no*.

b. The subject shift typically occurs in the expletives predicated by modals, *have* or *be*, including passives. Thus see the following (11)–(16).

(11) there wyl no wrushup be there-in at long way. (212051-2)

'there will be no worship therein at long way.'

(12) There xal no man ben so hardy to don nother seyn agens my lord of Sowthfolk(128046-7)

'There shall be no man so hardy (= bold) to do neither say against my lord of Suffolk.'

(13) ther schall no processe goo owt ageyn them.(248076-7)

'there shall go out no process against them.'

(14) that there shuld non assise be graunted to your entent. (455015)

'that there should be no assize granted (according) to your intent.'

(15) ther wol no man by yt a gret.(221020-1)

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'there will no man buy it a great (=by the whole piece,lump).'

(16) there woold no man take no scharge fore vus (211016)

'there would no man take no charge for us.'

To summarize our observation, what causes the negative subject shift in PL is the presence of modals, *have* or *be* in the tense of the main clause.

Presentday English (PE) does not allow the transitive expletive constructions like (15) and (16). Why were they acceptable in PL? I suspect that the associate NP *no man* should be assigned some other Case than partitive at S-Structure in these constructions, which is impossible in PE.

notes

¹The *Paston Letters* are the collection of the letters written by and to the Paston family in the 15th century.

²Spellings are modernized.

³The first three numbers denote the letter number, and the rest the line number of the Davis' edition.

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