

パストン家書簡集における存在文の諸問題

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Existential *There* in *Paston Letters*

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1. *Introduction.*

Existential sentences begin with the unstressed *there*, which K.Allan (1971) calls *there* 1. Jespersen (1949 : 107) says the existential *there* differs from the local adv *there* (1) by having weak stress, (2) by losing its local meaning; hence the possibility of combining it with local advs, (3) by being a quasi-subject, thus e. g. in an infinitival construction and with an ing, (4) by the tendency to have the vb in sg form with a pl subject, and (5) by the word-order: *there is nothing wrong*, but *there nothing is wrong*:. The last distinction (5) shows that *there* 1 is the surface subject of the sentence, whereas *there* 2 in K.Allan's terms is not. He asserts that *there* 2 can refer to a 'concrete' location and thus serves as the proform of the locative phrases. See (1) and (2).

- (1) (a) There1's always John of course.
(b) There2's John! Over there2!

(K.Allan 1971:3)

(2) There₂, in Africa, there₁ are lions.

(*Ibid.* 4)

In his opinion *there* 1 is locative, but does not specify a particular location. Existential *there*, that is, *there* 1 marks the point of initiation of the sentence, theme, which often conveys 'given information'. The part which follows *there be* is the focus position where 'new information' lies. From logical point of view *there* 1 *be* contains an existential operator and can be regarded as a constituent of the noun phrase just like other operators as well as a tense marker. (K.Allan 1971:13).

The noun phrase after *there be* is the notional subject of the existential sentence, and is typically indefinite because the indefinite article typically indicates 'new information.' (*Ibid* 13). G.L.Milsark(1976:116-118) notes that universally quantified noun phrases are also excluded in this position. See (3).

(3) * There $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{are } \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{all dogs} \\ \text{both dogs} \end{array} \right\} \\ \text{is } \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{every dog} \\ \text{each} \end{array} \right\} \end{array} \right\}$ in this room.

(G.L.Milsark 1976:117)

He suggests that the definite determiner *the* may be regarded as a species of universal quantification. (*Ibid.* 118). There are, however, several kinds of counterexamples in this respect. See (4)-(8) below.

(4) Q. How could we get there?

A. Well, there's the trolley...

(Rando & Napoli 1978:300)

- (5) There's the most unusual bird in the cage.

(*Ibid.* 301)

- (6) There was never that problem in America.

(*Ibid.* 305)

- (7) There are all kinds of problems with that hypothesis.

(*Ibid.* 307)

- (8) There is every reason to believe it's wrong.

(*Ibid.*)

Rando & Napoli conclude that the distinction anaphoric vs. non-anaphoric is relevant in existential sentences rather than that of definite vs. indefinite.

A. Belletti (1988) proposes an interesting hypothesis as to the case assignment of the noun phrase after *there be*. She asserts that this NP is assigned partitive Case by the preceding verb *be*. In her opinion the verb *be* belongs to the class of verbs called unaccusative, which can assign to their object partitive Case but not accusative Case. A definite NP is essentially incompatible with partitive Case. That is why this NP is disallowed in existentials. According to her theory *there* is inserted only at Deep Structure into its surface position; that is, at the beginning of the sentence, and the argument of the verb *be* is generated in the object position at Deep Structure. (A. Belletti 1988:4). Partitive Case is inherently assigned by unaccusative verbs to the NP in object position. (*Ibid.* 17). Although we cannot agree with her immediately, her hypothesis deserves attention because we do not have the slightest idea as to the status of the NP after *there be*. This NP is often called the notional subject of the

existential sentence (cf. Quirk et al. 1972:956), and should be distinguished from its surface subject *there*, whose case is determined in terms of its position at Surface Structure, regardless of the nature of the main verb.

2. *There Construction in Paston Letters.*

The English language has had existential sentences since the Old English period. L.G.Breivik (1983:257) notes that *there* 1 is interchangeable with the expletive *it* in earlier English. In PL *there* 1 cooccurs with *there* 2 in the same sentence. Cf. section 1 (2). See (1).

(1) There my Lady Felbrygg and other jantyll-women desyryd
to have hadde yow there;

(PL 141.20-21)

There in the following example (2) is *there* 2.

(2) ...suche service was non used to be there, nor with-yn the
sayd citee,

(PL 48,63-4)

There appears in the participle construction in (3).

(3) , beyng there thanne a grete congregacion of people bycause
of the seyde shyre,

(PL 5,17-18)

In (4) the notional subject NP is plural, but the verb is singular.

(4) for ther is gret spies leid here at London...

(PL 71,10-11)

In (5) the expletive *it* is used instead of *there*.

(5) ,and ther-for me thowt it had be no sendyng of no lettyr
by hem.

(PL 167.8)

In (6) *there* appears before *to do*.

(6) ,as it semeth purposyng there to have modrderid the seid
Paston

(PL 40.22-23)

The following are the types of *there*-construction found in PL.

Type be + V-en NP

(7) ,that ther was take of Ser T.T. and..., certeyn mony for
repayment

(PL 77.22-25)

(8) Ther is laboryd many menys to intytill the Kyng in his good.

(PL 86.17)

(9) ...that there be yeuen vnto the saide church..., to be... and
for... to..., a conuenient rewarde...

(PL 113.10-14)

(10) And if there be fown no sech swth be the seyd frere,

(PL 37.37-38)

Type be NP V-en

(11) ...ther was than no swich processe sued ne had;

(PL 2.21)

(12) ...ore there xall be vc hedys brok there-fore.

(PL 115.13-14)

(13) ...if there were any questionys mevyd to hym there-of

(PL 116.10-11)

Type be + V-ing NP

(14) And there ys owyng yow by som man... to the somme of
cli. before Myghellmasse;

(PL 53.8-10)

- (15) ...there were goyng upon the maners iij ml shep...

(PL 64.71-72)

- (16) ,for ther is commyn hider to me a seruauante of my lord
of Bukynghams,

(PL 108.15-16)

Type be NP V-ing

- (17) ...that there ys so grete debt lyeng vppon your tenautes
at ones to rere.

(PL 53.11-12)

Type be NP Adjective

- (18) be-cawse ther is no some of mony sertayn ne...

(PL 106.16)

Type be Adjective NP

- (19) there were out proclamacions agaynst yow,

(PL 117.42-43)

Type Main Verb (other than be) NP

- (20) And ther knoweth no man how soon God woll clepe hym.

(PL 30.11-12)

- (21) ...ther shuld come in-to Seyne cc gret forstages owt of

(PL 63.8-10)

- (22) ...there was come a newe writ for to haue hym vp...

(PL 25.15)

- (23) ,for ther longyth no jugement to the matter.

(PL 77.106)

- (24) And so I hope ther shal nede no gret trete be-twyxe hym.

(PL 13.6-7)

- (25) ...ther xulde goe noe penny for your life;

(PL 117.24-5)

Type Aux NP Main Verb

- (26) ...ther xuld nowth ben don agens 3w ther-jn...

(PL 128.34-5)

- (27) Ther xal no man ben so hardy to don...

(PL 128.46-48)

- (28) ...so low that there may non man schete owt...

(PL 130.3)

Type be Prep Phrase NP

- (29) Ther wer vpon the costes of Norfolk and Suffolk a xiiij
seyle of Depe,...

(PL 63.14-15)

- (30) ..., there be of hem so many...

(PL 40.72-73)

Type be NP Main Verb(finite)

- (31) that there was a thryfty woman come forby...

(PL 23.11-12)

- (32) nere ther was non in the place wist that...

(PL 132.12-13)

- (33) There was a persone warnyd my moder... that...

(PL 133.19-20)

- (34) ...if ther were any man coud vndirstand it.

(PL 77.100)

Although the list above is not exhaustive, we can get an overview of existential sentences in PL.

Quirk et al. (1972:961-2) discusses *have*-existential sentences. See(35).

(35) The porter had a taxi ready.

(cf. There was a taxi ready.)

The sentences below are very interesting in this connection.

(36) And as for the ward, he was not ther, but ther was had
a-noder chyld lyk hym...

(PL 497.15-16)

(37) ,and he hath many wordys myth wele be left.

(PL 143.17-8)

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