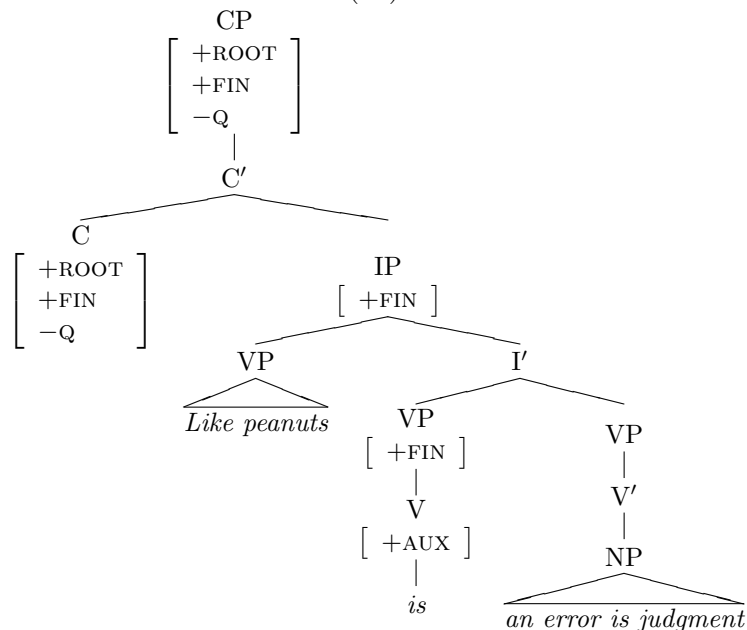


(3) SURFACE STRUCTURE FOR (2c):



The goal of this squib is to demonstrate that these two assumptions cannot be maintained simultaneously, even though each seems initially plausible. Our evidence comes an English construction that we call the *locative PP construction*, which is exemplified below. In surface structure, this construction consists of a locative PP (such as *in the cave*), followed by a constituent that seems to be VP (such as *sleep many frightful trolls and monsters*).

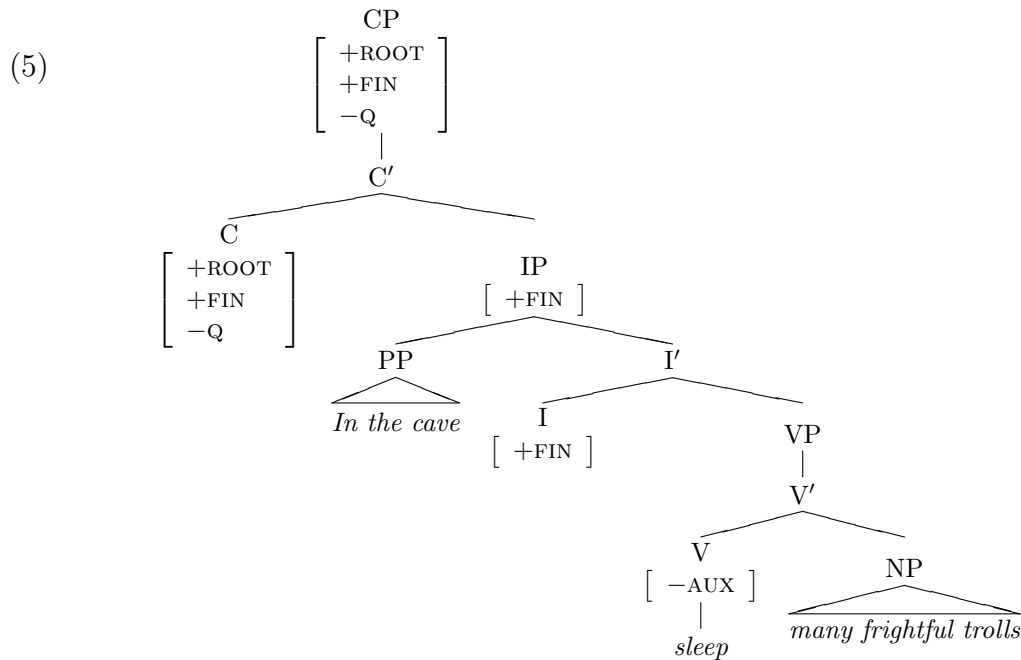
- (4)
- a. In the cave sleep many frightful trolls and monsters.
 - b. “Through those coruscating channels will ultimately run most of the commerce of the world. . .”
—David Denby. *The speed of light*. *The New Yorker*, 27 November 2000 (p. 141)
 - c. “If this chunk is left in peace, from it will regenerate a new entire cucumber.”
—David Quammen. *A better idea*. *Natural Acts* (p. 6)

There are two initially plausible proposals about the position of the locative PP in this construction:

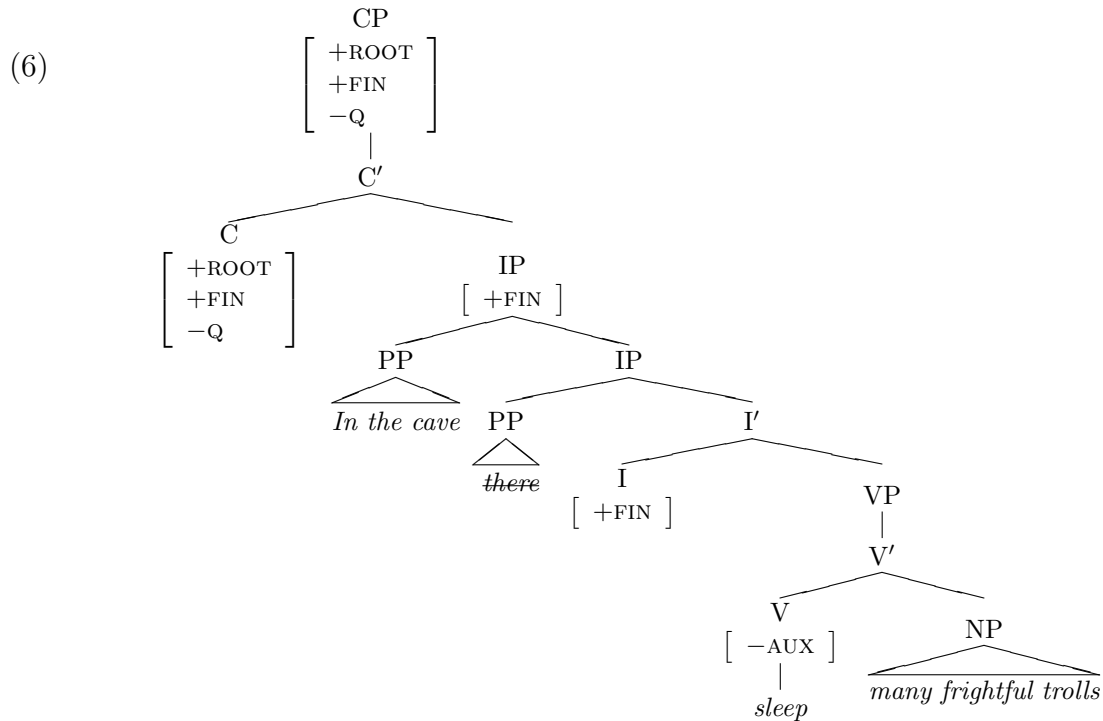
PROPOSAL A: the locative PP is the surface subject of the Locative construction.

PROPOSAL B: the locative PP is a modifier adjoined to the left of IP. The surface subject of the locative PP construction is an expletive which is similar to the *there* of *There-Insertion*, but unpronounced.

Under Proposal A, the surface structure of *In the cave sleep many frightful trolls* is as shown in (5).



On the other hand, under Proposal B, the surface structure of this sentences will be the following:



Notice that if Proposal A is correct, then at least some English clauses have subjects that are not NP or CP, but rather PP. On the other hand, if Proposal B is correct, then at least some finite clauses in English have surface subjects that are are not pronounced.

Below, we give two sorts of evidence in favor of Proposal B. The first establishes that the locative PP construction involves *There*-Insertion and so its surface subject is an expletive of some sort. The second argues that the locative PP is not the subject.

2 Evidence for *There*-Insertion

The simplest argument that the locative PP construction involves *There*-Insertion is that the expletive *there* can actually occur, an observation exploited to great effect by Postal (1977). The examples in (4) have alternative versions in which *there* shows up between the locative PP and the VP.:

- (7)
- a. In the cave there sleep many frightful trolls and monsters.
 - b. Through those coruscating channels there will ultimately run most of the commerce of the world. . .
 - c. If this chunk is left in place, from it there will regenerate a new entire cucumber.

This *there* really is an expletive and not the adverbial *there* synonymous with ‘over there’. For one thing, like the expletive *there*, it cannot be emphasized. It is impossible to read any of the examples just given with contrastive stress on *there*.

A second similarity between this *there* and the expletive is that the NP on the right that is closest to *there* must be indefinite in some sense. By this we mean that the NP must contain a weak determiner such as *a*, *some*, *many*, *no* and so on, not a strong determiner such as *every*, *all*, *most*, *both*, *the*. Consider the contrasts in (8).

- (8)
- a. There stood a/*every hippo near the fence.
 - b. There lounged by the pool some/*most hoodlums from the neighborhood.
- (9)
- a. Near the fence (there) stood a/*every hippo.
 - b. By the pool (there) lounged some/*most hoodlums from the neighborhood.

Third, the *there* that is synonymous with ‘over there’ can appear with any predicate at all, as suggested by (10).

- (10)
- a. Here, it is safe. But there, some wolves gobbled-up a pack of cub scouts.
 - b. In the back of the plane, it was quiet. But [pointing to the bulkhead] there a little baby shrieked throughout the flight.

In contrast, the expletive *there* can occur with just a small class of verbs: verbs of existence or coming into being. This limitation holds for the *there* of the locative PP construction as well; see (11).

- (11) a. *There gobbled up some wolves a pack of cub scouts.
 b. *In the woods (there) gobbled up some wolves a pack of cub scouts.
 c. *There shrieked a tiny little baby throughout the flight.
 d. *Throughout the flight (there) shrieked a tiny little baby.

Fourth and finally, subject–verb agreement works the same way in the locative PP construction as it does in sentences that have undergone *There*-Insertion. The leftmost auxiliary or verb agrees with the obligatorily indefinite NP, not with *there*:

- (12) a. In the cave (there) sleep/*sleeps many frightful trolls.
 b. In the cave (there) sleeps/*sleep a frightful troll.

In order to allow *There*-Insertion to apply within the locative PP construction, I propose that *be* and all other verbs of existence and coming into being bear the feature [+EXIST] and that the revised *There*-Insertion transformation refers to this feature. Our revised transformation is in (13).

- (13) *There*-INSERTION (optional)
- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|----|---|---|
| NP | — | V _[+EXIST] | — | BE | — | Y |
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 |
| [<i>there</i>] _{NP} | | 2+1 | | 3 | | 4 |

CONDITIONS: term 1 must be indefinite; term 2 must not contain [+EXIST]

This transformation applies to a clause containing verb that is [+EXIST], and produces a clause in which the underlying subject has moved to become a right sister of the verb. This transformation, we claim, has applied in the Locative construction, whether or not *there* is pronounced in surface structure.

2.1 The fronted PP is not a subject

The fact that the verb in the locative PP construction agrees with the first NP to its right, not with the locative PP at the beginning of the clause, provides some evidence that the PP is not the subject. See (12) above for supporting data.

Another argument that the locative PP is not the subject is based on tag questions. Tag questions consist of an auxiliary followed by an NP and are appended to statements to express doubt or ask for reassurance. The crucial generalization, due to (McCawley 1998:251), is that the subject of the tag question agrees with the subject of the sentence to which it is attached. This agreement is illustrated below.

- (14) a. George enjoys pea-soup, doesn't {he/*it/*they}?
 b. There is a beautiful statue in the garden, isn't there?
 c. In the garden is a beautiful statue, isn't there? (Bresnan 1994:67)
 d. {Then/at that time} were proposed several alternatives, weren't {there/*then}.

Significantly, the subject of a tag question appended to the locative PP construction must be *there*. In (14d), the fronted PP *at that time* has a pronominal form *then*. But *then* cannot appear in the tag, as the example shows.

There are two ways to account for locative PP constructions in which *there* is not pronounced. The first would be to posit a silent version of *there*. Following the analysis we arrived at in class for null versions of the complementizer *that*, one could imagine a version of *there* that is [–PRONOUNCED]. However, we are not sure how to guarantee that this unpronounced expletive would occur only in sentences that begin with a locative PP.

Another approach would be to write a transformation that simply deletes the expletive *there* when a locative PP precedes. This is the approach that we advocate here. Our transformation is formalized in (15).

(15) *There-DELETION* (optional)

PP	—	[<i>there</i>] _{NP}	—	Y
1		2		3
1		∅		3

This rule optionally deletes the NP *there* when it is to the immediate right of a PP. We mark it as an optional transformation. But there are cases, pointed out by Bresnan (1994:99ff), where it seems obligatory.) This transformation does not delete locative *there*, because that item is a PP, as (16) suggests.

- (16) a. Put it on the table! Yes, right there!
 b. *During that era right there reigned an evil queen.

In (16a), *there* is modified by the PP modifier *right* (and also pronominalizes the PP *on the table*). (16b) shows that NP *there* cannot be modified by *right*; if this example has life at all, it is only where there is a silent NP there and *right there* indicates, rather implausibly, that the speaker is pointing to the location of the terrible queen’s dominion.

If our transformation is correct, then there are some finite clauses of English that do not have a subject that is pronounced.

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