Locative Inversion without inversion

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This paper addresses the long-standing and well-studied issue of Locative Inversion in English (LI), structures in which a PP is preposed and the notional DP subject remains in a postverbal position; e.g. *In the doorway stood a wizard*. A Minimalist analysis of LI must account for two things: how the EPP is satisfied without a DP in Spec,TP, and how the PP moves past the notional DP subject without violating locality. I propose a novel and straightforward solution: the PP satisfies the EPP directly, and it never 'moves past' the DP. Instead, I argue that the PP in LI base-generates in the specifier of unaccusive *v*, higher than the notional DP subject. Under this analysis (schematized in Figure 1), LI does *not* involve actual syntactic inversion, and thus is not in danger of violating locality.

Discussions of LI focus on the final position of the PP, arguing that it either ends in topic position in Spec,CP (Bruening (2010), Postal (2004), Rizzi & Schlonsky (2006)), or in subject position in Spec,TP (Culicover & Levine (2001), Doggett (2004), Levin & Rappaport Hovav (1995)). Those that argue for a topicalization approach avoid locality violations through A'-movement of the PP. However, these analyses struggle to explain how the EPP is satisfied, having to propose mechanisms of 'indirect satisfaction' (Rizzi & Shlonsky) or a covert *there* in subject position (Bruening). Proponents of a PP-as-subject approach can explain EPP satisfaction (the PP checks EPP directly), but have trouble avoiding locality violations, and require ad hoc mechanisms like Doggett's (2004) rightward-adjunction of the DP.

Figure 1

This paper focuses on where the PP base-generates. I show that reconsidering the PPs base-generation site is able to provide simpler solutions than those offered by proposals that assume a verb-complement or adjunction relationship. In support of a 'high' base-generation site of the PP in Spec,*v*P, I cite evidence from **NPI licensing** , restrictions on **Goal PPs**, and discuss the similarity of LI to expletive-*there*-insertion, namely the restriction to verbs without external arguments. To support the PP's presence in Spec,TP, I cite evidence from **raising**, **embedding**, **weak-crossover effects**, and **agreement**.

First, a high origin of the PP in Spec,*v*P accounts for the PP's ability to license NPIs in the DP (e.g. *Nowhere in the park stood any ruins*): the PP base-generates in a position that c-commands the DP. Second, the inability of Goal PPs to participate in LI is structurally motivated (**to Bobby's house ran Audrey*), as these must generate VP-internally in order to align with a θ-position.

Last, under my proposal LI is isomorphic with Deal's (2009)'low'-generation analysis of *there*-insertion. This allows it to capture the argument construction constraints shared by both constructions; because both the PP and expletive-*there* originate in Spec,*v*P, there cannot be anything else occupying this position. This accounts for the inability of LI to occur with transitives and inchoatives (which have a CAUSE argument in the external argument position (Deal 2009:7)). This aligns with Culicover & Levine's (2001) claim that LI only occurs with unaccusative verbs (which only have an internal argument). The proposal is also in agreement with Bresnan's (1994:82) observation that verbs allowing LI must 'predicate location or direction of their subjects', as these are the same class of verbs that are able to undergo demotion of an agentive DP to an internal argument position (e.g. *run* and *sit*) (Mendikoetxea 2006).

Because the PP in LI and *there*-insertion base-generate in the same position, the two constructions are in complementary distribution, contra Bruening (2010) who argues for a covert *there* in all cases of LI. Under Breuning's analysis, (1a) is a surface variant of (1d); both are 'compositional structures' (a la Birner, Kaplan & Ward (2007)) involving both *there*-insertion (1b) and 'locative topicalization' (1c) (Bruno 2016).
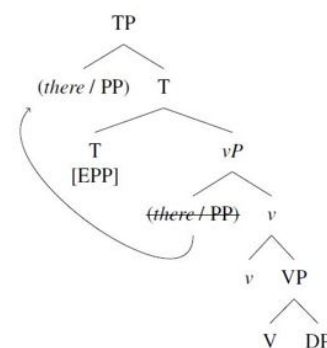
I argue that Bruening's PP+*there* construction (1d) is distinct from LI (1a), and that LI is *not* a compositional structure in the same sense. All underlined phrases originate in Spec,*v*P.

(1)   a.   **LI**: <u>On the desk</u> sits a letter.

   b.   *There*-**insertion**: <u>There</u> sits a letter *on the desk*.

   c.   **Locative topicalization**: *On the desk* a letter sits.

   d.   *There*-**insertion + Locative topicalization**: *On the desk* <u>there</u> sits a letter.

Because the two constructions (LI and PP+*there*) are distinct, this analysis predicts behavioral differences such as those given in (2).

(2)   a.   **NPI licensing**: Nowhere in the park (*there) stood any ruins. (Doggett 2004:28)

   b.   **Questions without auxiliary inversion**: On which wall (*there) hung the portrait? (*ibid*)

   (Cf *On which wall did *(there) hang the portrait?*)

   c.   **Hearer-old restriction**: Into the room (*there) walked Audrey. (Birner & Ward 1993:31)

   d.   **Short-PP forms**: And in (*there) comes a raging rhino. (Author's observation)

A secondary goal of this paper is to argue against evidence previously used to support the PP being in Spec,CP (given in (3)). As indicated by the use of **#** rather than *****, I argue that these constraints are related to pragmatic felicity and not grammaticality.

(3)   a.   **Negation**: #Into the room didn't run a raging rhino.

   b.   **Polar questions**: #Did into the room run a raging rhino?

   c.   **Irrealis moods**: #Into the room might run a raging rhino.

Bresnan (1994:85) argues that LI serves the special discourse function of 'presentational focus', and is used to introduce (or reintroduce) a discourse referent. The examples in (3) fail to do so, and so result in awkwardness. Though other approaches are able to account for these constraints individually, the simplicity of a single pragmatic constraint supports a division of labor between the syntactic structure and discourse function of the construction.

   The proposal presented in this paper gives a novel analysis of a noncanonical structure in English, LI, that has stubbornly resisted a satisfying explanation. This is accomplished via an extension of Deal's analysis of expletive-*there* in which a non-DP element originates in the specifier position of unaccusative little-*v*. The current proposal captures the distribution of LI without having to postulate null expletives or resort to ad hoc movement operations. It also adds to the literature arguing for a necessary division between syntactic grammaticality and pragmatic felicity.

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