The Syntax of Thetic Statements in English

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This article offers a formal approach to thetic statements in English that focuses on the structural mechanisms available in this language to express a reading of this sort. I explain the opposition categorical/thetic as the result of two alternative ways to value discourse intention [DI], a core intentional feature (CIF) which signals the point of departure of the proposition. This feature is standardly accessed at the phonological component in English, but I argue that it may also be valued through syntactic means, in particular through the insertion of a language particular category, LocP, which serves a double purpose: 1) to keep the subject low in the verbal phrase while still complying with the Extended Projection Principle (EPP); and, 2) to allow a locative phrase to value [DI]. This way, the grammar maintains a balance between the interface need to express a nonpredicative assertion and the computational requirement to have a preverbal subject. I also show how presentational *there*-sentences and so-called *locative inversion* (LI) structures result from the structural possibilities opened in LocP, thus offering an analysis that accounts for the similarities and differences between the two constructions in a principled way.

Keywords: thetic statement; core intentional feature; discourse intention; presentational *there*; locative inversion

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La sintaxis de los enunciados téticos en inglés

Este artículo ofrece un análisis formal de los enunciados téticos en inglés, centrándose en los mecanismos estructurales de que dispone esta lengua para expresar este tipo de interpretación. Se explica la oposición categórico/tético como el resultado de dos formas alternativas de validar la intención discursiva [DI], un rasgo intencional de carácter nuclear

que marca el punto de arranque de la proposición. Este rasgo se comprueba en inglés, de manera general, en el componente fonológico, pero aquí propongo que también puede validarse en la sintaxis, en concreto mediante la inserción de una categoría, LocP, que cumple una doble función: 1) facilitar que el sujeto se mantenga dentro del sintagma verbal sin que esto impida cumplir con el *Extended Projection Principle* (EPP); y, 2) permitir que un sintagma locativo valide [DI]. De esta manera, la gramática garantiza que se mantiene un equilibrio entre la necesidad de expresar una aserción no predicativa y el requisito computacional de tener un sujeto preverbal. Se demuestra, también, cómo las oraciones introducidas por el expletivo de presentación *there* y las denominadas estructuras de *inversión locativa* (LI) se siguen de las posibilidades estructurales que permite LocP, ofreciéndose así un análisis que da cuenta de las semejanzas y diferencias entre las dos construcciones de forma explícita.

Palabras clave: enunciado tético; rasgo intencional nuclear; intención discursiva; *there* expletivo; inversión locativa

1. INTRODUCTION

At the end of the nineteenth century, the philosophers Franz Brentano and Anton Marty challenged the notion of a single type of judgment composed of a subject and a predicate in the Aristotelian sense (Brentano 1874; Marty 1918). The idea behind this is that sentences do not always make a statement about an entity but may merely serve to recognize some state of affairs; therefore, the standard bipartite structure of logical subject-predicate should not be the only possible one in intentional terms. Consider, in this respect, the different interpretations of Shigeyuki Kuroda's well-known pair of examples in Japanese (1972, 161):

(1)   a. Inu wa   hasitte iru.
           dog   running is
           ["The/A dog is running."]
        b. Inu ga   hasitte iru.
           dog   running is
           ["There is a dog running."]

In (1a), the -*wa* marked subject is understood as the point of departure of the proposition, the logical subject. In this case, the sentence is said to constitute a *categorical statement* where something—the event of running—is predicated about that subject. In contrast, in (1b) the sentence is conceived as a nonpredicative assertion of a state of affairs—the event of running is taking place and the dog is simply conceived of as a participant involved in that event. Here, the sentence constitutes a *thetic statement* where the starting point of the judgment is the recognition of an event set in a particular place or time. According to this view, categorical judgments require two separate acts in their resolution: 1) recognition of the entity; and 2) affirmation or denial of the predicate's relation to that entity. As for thetic judgments, they are logically unstructured and simply imply recognition or rejection of some state of affairs located in place or time.

As Hans-Jürgen Sasse argues (1987), the distinction between categorical and thetic statements has to be considered a universal of thought and, therefore, it is expected to be crosslinguistically reflected in the derivation of the sentence, either morphologically—as in (1) above—syntactically or phonologically. The effect on grammar of the informational features behind the categorical/thetic distinction must then be accounted for. The systematic study of the relationship between information structure and grammar started in the Prague School with the seminal work of Vilém Mathesius (1928)—see František Daneš's overview of the functional perspective of the Prague School on this (1974) —but after the seminal work of Luigi Rizzi on the structure of the sentential left periphery (1997), the syntactic articulation of informational notions has become an extensive object of study in the formal paradigm as well. As has been repeatedly acknowledged, though, research in this area encounters an important difficulty in the terminological chaos that surrounds some informational concepts, to the point that

one may find different, and sometimes contradictory, definitions of terms such as *topic*, *theme*, *comment*, *rheme*, *focus*, etc., in the relevant literature (see Reinhart 1981; Breul 2004; Casielles-Suárez 2004; and Gundel and Fretheim 2005, among others).

This absence of uniformity in terminology has been frequently accompanied by some disagreement regarding the division underlying most of these concepts, namely between what should be considered *given* and *new* information in the sentence. Consequently, two different approaches to givenness/newness have been adopted in the literature, referential and relational. Referential givenness-newness involves a relation between a linguistic expression and a corresponding nonlinguistic entity in the speaker/hearer's mind, in the context or in some real or possible world—important references in this connection are Wallace Chafe (1974) and Ellen Prince's influential classification of entities as discourse-old/discourse-new and hearer-old/hearer-new (1981). As for relational givenness-newness, it can be defined sentence-internally and involves a partition of the sentence into two complementary parts, X and Y: X will be old information if it is outside the scope of what is asserted in Y (see Gundel 1999; Gundel and Fretheim 2005, and references therein).

In this article I will discuss to what extent the interface requirement to organize new/old information in a sentence may influence the syntactic structure of English, a language where word order is driven by formal features which unmarkedly place the subject sentence-initially. The term *subject* with no further specification is used here to refer to the determiner phrase (DP) that displays some morphological agreement with the inflected verb, even if the inflectional morphology is rather deficient, as in the case of English. As I will discuss below, the subject understood in this way unmarkedly sits in the specifier of the tense phrase (TP)—which is the canonical subject position—but may remain verb phrase-internal in some thetic statements. In section 2, I present the theoretical assumptions behind my analysis to then focus, in section 3, on the structural means available in English to leave the subject VP-internally, forming an unstructured intentional package with the event, which allows for a nonpredicative reading of the sentence. I will exemplify my proposal with presentational *there*-sentences and with the so-called process of *locative inversion* (LI), providing an analysis that treats these constructions as two alternative means to obtain a thetic statement of this sort. Section 4 offers some conclusions.

2. Core Intentional Features

The analysis I present here is couched in the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995 and subsequent work), a theoretical model that takes a modular approach to linguistic facts:

Figure 1. Minimalism Program
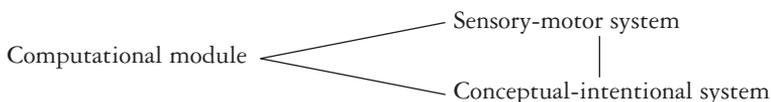
As represented in figure 1, the grammar has a computational module that generates hierarchically structured sentences and feeds two interface systems: 1) the *sensory-motor system*, which ensures that sentences are pronounceable, and 2) the *conceptual-intentional system*, which ensures that they are meaningful and intentionally adequate. These two systems are also linked in a relevant way, as discussed by María Luisa Zubizarreta (1998; see also references therein).

This modular conception implies that information structure plays a decisive role in the derivation of the sentence in that it serves to connect the computational mechanism with the intentional system. Elsewhere, I have argued that the information structure of a sentence is codified in informational features that can be of two types, core intentional and pragmatic (2017). Core intentional features (CIFs) are obligatory and project even if the sentence appears in isolation and constitutes a full discourse in itself. In my earlier work, these sentences are referred to as *D-sentences* and always display an unmarked canonical order of constituents (2017). As for pragmatic features—those denoting different types of topic and focus—they are optional and appear in the derivation when sentences are in context, drastically conditioning their form and prosody. As I will discuss below, CIFs and pragmatic features interact in a significant way in context-sensitive sentences.

All derivations include, at least, two CIFs in the relevant phases—that is, in the relevant units of currency between syntax and the two interface systems—the feature [IF], which marks the intentional focus of the sentence and sits in v*, and the feature [DI], which marks its discourse intention and sits in C. This means that the intentional reading of a sentence will crucially depend on which constituent eventually values [DI] and thus becomes the intentional base of the clause. Two questions are therefore pertinent here: 1) which categories can value [DI]? and 2) what are the conditions that regulate this process of valuation?

Regarding the first question, one should bear in mind that [DI] serves to establish the point of departure of the proposition that, as argued above, can be an entity about which something is predicated—if the sentence is presented as a categorical statement—or some spatiotemporal coordinates that set the event in place or time—if the sentence is presented as an event-reporting thetic statement. Accordingly, the feature [DI] must be valued by a syntactic category that embodies an entity—a referential DP—or a syntactic category that embodies a location— a locative phrase. As for the second question—the process of valuation—competition between these two possibilities is effected under prominence conditions. In context-free D-sentences, valuation of [DI] is a matter of computational economy and is therefore measured in terms of structural prominence: the category hosting [DI] will target the closest DP or locative constituent in its local c-command domain. As a consequence, if the most prominent category structurally is a DP, this is targeted and a categorical statement will obtain. However, if the most prominent category is a locative PP, this is targeted and a thetic statement follows. Finally, if a DP and a PP are structurally equidistant, any of the two can be targeted, which means that the sentence can be unmarkedly categorical or thetic. With respect

to context-annotated sentences, prominence is measured in terms of interface economy. In this case, the category hosting [DI] will target the DP or locative constituent that can become the starting point of the proposition with less retrieval cost—a nominal or a locative Given Topic. I will come back to this in section 3.

Finally, it should be noted that [DI] is a Universal Grammar (UG) feature and, as would be expected, subject to parametric variation. As discussed by Ángel Luis Jiménez-Fernández and Shigeru Miyagawa (2014), languages can be classified as *discourse prominent* or *agreement prominent* in terms of the type of features that are inherited by the head of TP (T) from the head of the complementizer phrase (C). In discourse-prominent languages, [DI] is inherited by T, which becomes a probe, and it is an EPP feature that forces the movement of a constituent into the specifier of TP (Spec-TP). [DI] is then valued in the narrow syntax and determines the basic order of the constituents, even in canonical sentences. This is the case in Spanish and many other Romance languages such as Romanian, Brazilian Portuguese and Italian (see Ojea 2019). In agreement-prominent languages such as English, however, [DI] remains in C and is accessed at the interfaces.

Before we move on to examing English specifically and showing how the intentional reading of a sentence may condition its otherwise rather fixed word order, I am going to consider the case of Spanish so that the differences between discourse-prominent and agreement-prominent languages can be clearly appreciated. In Spanish, T inherits both formal features and the CIF [DI] from C. [DI], then, eventually sits in T and therefore drives the syntactic computation of all sentences, including D-sentences. If one assumes an organization of the VP whereby the external argument projects in the specifier of v*P and is, therefore, the most prominent structurally with respect to T, this external argument will be the closest goal to value [DI] (for a standard definition of external argument, see, among others, Grimshaw 1990; Koopman and Sportiche 1991):[1]

(2) $[_{CP}$ $[_{TP\,[DI]\,[phi\text{-}f]}$ $[DP]_i$ V $[_{v*P}$ ~~[DP]~~$_i$ ~~V~~ $[_{VP}$ ~~V~~....

According to this, in D-sentences headed by a predicate with a DP external argument—an agentive predicate—this DP will be the intentional base, which means that these sentences will unmarkedly have a Subject-Verb order and their reading will be categorical:

(3)   Mónica   ha   terminado   su tesis.
       Monica   have-PRS.3SG   finish-PTCP.PRF   her thesis
       ["Monica has finished her doctoral dissertation."][2]

On the contrary, in D-sentences with a predicate that has a locative external argument—impersonal predicates such as *haber* "have," *faltar* "lack," *sobrar* "exceed," etc., the locative phrase will be targeted as the intentional base (see Fernández Soriano 1990 for a justification of the external argument status of the locative in these cases):

(4) $[_{CP}$ $[_{TP\,[DI]\,[phi\text{-}f]}$ $[PP]_i$ V $[_{v*P}$ [PP]_i V $[_{vP}$ V DP …

The unmarked order here will then be Locative-V-Subject, that is, the subject remains VP-internal, communicatively fused with a predicate that has been located in place or time. The reading is thus thetic:

(5) En el escaparate   falta   el vestido rojo.
     In the shop window   lack-PRS.3SG   the dress red
     ["The red dress is missing in the shop window."]

Finally, in cases where the predicate is unaccusative—a light verb that lacks an external argument (see Perlmutter 1978; Burzio 1986; Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995, among others)—all the constituents are in the same minimal domain, that is, equidistant to T, and therefore both a DP or a locative phrase can be targeted as intentional bases:

(6) $[_{CP}$ $[_{TP\,[DI]\,[phi\text{-}f]}$ $[DP]_i$ V $[_{vP}$ V [DP]_i $[PP]_j…$
     $[_{CP}$ $[_{TP\,[DI]\,[phi\text{-}f]}$ $[PP]_j$ V $[_{vP}$ V $[DP]_i$ $\text{[PP]}_j…$

As a result, the subject in Spanish can be preverbal (7) or postverbal (8) in D-sentences with unaccusative verbs, and both a categorical and a thetic reading can be obtained, even though semantic prominence may eventually force one option over the other (see Ojea 2017 for details):

(7) El gato de Susana ha   aparecido   en un sitio inesperado.
     The cat of Susan   have-PRS.3SG appear- PTCP.PRF   in a place unexpected
     ["Susan's cat has appeared in an unexpected place."]

(8) En mi jardín ha   aparecido   un gato.
     In my garden have-PRS.3SG appear- PTCP.PRF   a cat
     ["A cat has appeared in my garden."]

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particular context in which they are inserted. According to this, a sentence such as (3) could also be interpreted as a thetic statement if understood as the answer to a question such as *What has happened?*, since in this case the sentence would express nothing but new information. However, in this article I adopt a formal perspective that implies that all the sequences generated by the computational system must be intentionally legible, even when strictly out of the blue, that is, that the intentional reading of a sentence can be defined directly on syntactic structures.

The DP subject in Spanish and other discourse-prominent languages will therefore rise to Spec-TP only if it is the intentional base. Otherwise, it remains in its underlying position in the VP, thus inducing a thetic reading. In this configuration, the formal features in T and the case of the DP subject are valued under long-distance Agree with T (Chomsky 2008). This long-distance agreement is then a UG possibility that, as I will argue below, also applies in marked thetic constructions in English.

The facts reviewed above show that in discourse-prominent languages, the CIF [DI] crucially determines sentential word order. In English, in contrast, as an agreement-prominent language, T only inherits formal features. Therefore, in the latter instance, the EPP always forces a DP with person and number features into Spec-TP, no matter its structural or semantic prominence. Canonical out-of-the-blue sentences will, then, always be like examples (3) or (7)—that is, they will have the word order associated with categorical statements in discourse-prominent languages. As for the feature [DI], it remains in C and must be accessed at the interfaces, after the sentence has been pragmatically annotated in relation to the particular communicative situation in which it appears. As I will describe in the next section, there are different means of valuing this feature in English, some of which imply a computationally costly mechanism, which is nevertheless adopted for reasons of interface economy and, significantly, makes the word order in some English sentences equivalent to that found in unmarked thetic statements in discourse-prominent languages (on the notion of interface economy, see Reinhart 2006).

3. Expressing Theticity: Locative Intentional Bases in English

In English, the EPP is formal in nature and the CIF [DI] remains in C. The derivation of a D-sentence with an agentive verb will, then, standardly be as follows:

(9) $[_{CP\,[DI]}\quad [_{TP\,[phi\text{-}f]}\,[DP]_i\;[_{v*P}\;\cancel{[DP]_i}\;V\;[_{VP}\;\cancel{V}....$

The formal features inherited by T target the first element that can value them and, accordingly, the DP external argument unmarkedly moves to Spec-TP. The derivation will proceed the same way if the verb lacks an external argument—for example, in unaccusative structures—and thus the DP internal argument with the corresponding phi-features will be unmarkedly targeted into TP in this case as well:

(10) $[_{CP\,[DI]}\quad [_{TP\,[phi\text{-}f]}\,[DP]_i\;[_{VP}\;V\;\cancel{[DP]_i}\;PP...$

The final form of out-of-the-blue sentences in English, guided by the formal features in T, is therefore uniform with all verbal classes. Regarding the feature [DI], which remains in C, it will be valued at the interfaces in these sentences, specifically at the phonological interface. As a result, the difference between categorical and thetic statements in English will be unmarkedly expressed by intonation (see Chafe 1974;

Sasse 1987; Vallduví and Engdahl 1996; Breul 2004, among others). If the statement is conceived as categorical, the nuclear stress falls on the predicate but the subject also bears a pitch accent, thus reflecting the intentionally bipartite structure of the sentence as in example (11a). On the contrary, if it is meant as thetic, the nuclear stress falls on the subject, reflecting the unstructured intentional unit of the clause, as in (11b) (see Vallduví and Engdahl 1996; Breul 2004 for details):

(11) a. MAry is SINGing.
      b. The BRItish are coming.[3]

Sasse accounts for the duality categorical/thetic in out-of-the-blue sentences in terms of the type of (psychological) expectation one wants to induce in the hearer (1987). Nonetheless, the examples he uses to exemplify this point show that there is a strong correlation between the argumental structure of a verb and the intentional structure of the sentence it heads. Sentences whose verb has an external argument unmarkedly have two pitch accents—they express double judgements—while sentences with unaccusative verbs standardly have just one, on the subject—they express a thetic statement. In other words, (in)transitive and unaccusative structures, which have a different phasal makeup in that the former minimally consist of two phases whereas the latter consist of only one, also differ in their unmarked reading and prosody. Examples (12) and (13) have been taken from Sasse (1987, 520):

(12) HARry is SINGing / *HARry is singing.
      The PRINcess SNEEZED / *The PRINcess sneezed.

(13) HARry is coming / *HARry is COMing.
      The SUN is shining / *The SUN is SHINing.

Word order in English out-of-the-blue sentences is therefore fixed, with intonation doing the work of marking the differences in their intentional status. Sentences do not necessarily need to be pronounced, though, and so we expect agreement-prominent languages to have some structural means of obtaining a thetic reading when needed, while ensuring that communicative efficiency does not prevent computational efficiency. As argued above, in thetic statements the starting point of the proposition is a category that locates the event in place or time, while the DP subject is actually understood as an entity involved in the event, not as the entity the event is about. When languages are discourse prominent and [DI] is an EPP feature, a structure is obtained where a locative category is placed sentence-initially to value [DI] and the DP subject remains VP-internal, communicatively fused with the verbal

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   [3]   For phonological distinctions, I use a standard notation that marks accented syllables with capital letters. This notation is useful here because it represents very clearly—visually speaking—the most relevant prosodic difference between categorical and thetic statements, even if it does not capture other prosodic details.

predicate—in this respect, the Spanish examples in (5) and (8) should be recalled. I assume, then, that in agreement-prominent languages there must be some marked mechanism that allows for the possibility of such an anomalous word order in thetic statements, while still granting that computational requirements, such as the EPP, are preserved.

My proposal in this respect is that, when the communicative situation unambiguously forces a thetic reading, English projects a category LocP that codifies the fact that the clause is simply intended to convey a state of affairs located in place or time. This category has a (c)overt locative DP expletive in its specifier and it is E-merged with the VP, provided the verb is informationally light and simply sets a scene. This in principle excludes agentive verbs, which typically convey new information about their external arguments (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995, 231), but see below. Therefore, if the verb does not have an external argument, I assume that English allows for the following constituent structure in the relevant contexts:

(14) $[_{CP} [_{DI}] [_{TP} [phi\text{-}F] [_{LocP} [_{DP} \text{ expletive}]_{loc} [_{LOC}] [_{VP} \text{ V DP PP}]]]]^4$

Structurally, LocP has the following properties: 1) it is headed by a [LOC] feature, which can only be valued by verbs having a locative component in their conceptual structure; 2) it has a locative expletive in its specifier that can be lexical (*there*) or covert, in which case a lexical locative phrase is needed to identify it—as (14) shows, this locative DP expletive constitutes the closest goal to value the EPP phi-features in T, thus preventing the subject from leaving VP. The first property establishes a clear divide in the expression of theticity between unaccusative verbs of location/existence—verbs of appearance, existence and inherently directed motion—and unaccusative verbs of change of state. The second equates presentational *there*-sentences with the so-called phenomenon of LI, something that brings about interesting empirical consequences that I will discuss below.[5]

3.1. Presentational *There*-sentences
In standard generative analyses, expletive *there* in sentences such as (15) has customarily been understood as a placeholder in Spec-TP to satisfy the formal EPP in English (see Emonds 1969; Milsark 1974; Stowell 1978; Burzio 1986; Lasnik 1995; Chomsky 1995, among others):

[4]   Teun Hoekstra and René Mulder (1990) and Patricia L. Irwin (2012), among others, defend an analysis of unaccusative structures where the unaccusative verb takes a small clause as its complement. Although an analysis of this sort could serve to account nicely for some similarities between *there* constructions and LI, I leave it for future elaboration. In any case, a small clause analysis would still require—or be compatible with—a LocP to host the locative expletive, which, for obvious reasons, cannot be the subject of the predication.

[5]   Following standard grammatical tradition, I refer to expletive *there* with verbs other than the copula *be* as presentational *there* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1402). All the grammaticality judgements that follow are also based on the description of the constructions at stake here in reputed contemporary grammars of Standard English (Quirk et al. (1985); Huddleston and Pullum (2002)).

(15) There appeared a hideous creature on the stage.

In contrast, in the analysis proposed here, reminiscent of those by Amy Rose Deal (2009) and Irwin (2012), *there* is a locative expletive that originates in the category that syntactically encodes theticity when the sentence is in an appropriate context. As shown in (16), the derivation proceeds as follows: T searches for a phi-set and comes across *there* as the closest DP goal, targeting it into Spec-TP to value the EPP phi-features of T; as a result, *there* eventually sits in the structural subject position. As is well known, though, *there* only has a partial set of phi-features—specifically, a person feature—and therefore T must continue probing for a more remote goal: the DP subject on which it values the feature number, thus inducing morphological agreement with it. As a reflex, the case-feature of the DP is also checked, in a fashion similar to that of discourse-prominent languages. Finally, since *there* is semantically locative, it can also serve as an appropriate intentional base and it values [DI] in C covertly:

(16) [$_{CP}$ **[DI]** [$_{TP}$ [Phi-f] [$_{DP}$**there**]$_i$ [$_{LocP}$ [$_{DP}$~~**there**~~]$_i$ V [$_{VP}$ ~~V~~ **DP** PP]

As mentioned above, the fact that presentational *there* is contingent on the projection of the category LocP heavily restricts the types of verbs that can appear in the construction, since the verb must value the feature [LOC] in the projection: only unaccusative verbs expressing appearance (15), existence (17) or inherently directed motion (18) will be possible, not unaccusatives of change of state (19):

(17) There exists a great deal of sympathy between them.

(18) There came a sad-looking woman out of the house.

(19) *There melted a piece of butter in the oven.

The derivation in (16) also shows that *there* and the DP subject are connected by virtue of their being two links of a chain that eventually serves to probe the relevant features in T and C. In this respect, *there*, a nonreferential expletive, generally induces a definiteness effect on its associate, which remains structurally low and may undergo existential closure (Diesing 1992):

(20) a. There appeared children on the stage.
      b. *There appeared Shrek on the stage.

In sum, presentational *there*-sentences are a means to obtain a thetic statement while ensuring that, even if the derivation is costlier for intentional reasons, computational requirements are preserved and a balance is kept between computational economy and interface economy.

3.2. Locative Inversion

As I will show below, the structure in (14) predicts that English may allow for sentences such as (21) alongside (15) if the required discourse conditions are met:[6]

(21) On the stage appeared a hideous creature.

This construction, traditionally labelled locative inversion (LI), can be approached as the result of an alternative derivation to (16), where the locative expletive in the specifier position of LocP is covert. Paul Postal was the first to suggest that LI could involve the presence of a covert expletive (1977) and Noam Chomsky also takes this position (2008, 67); Peter Coopmans (1989), Hoekstra and Mulder (1990) and Benjamin Bruening (2010) offer analyses along the same lines. Assuming this, in the derivation of these sentences T probes the covert $Expl_{loc}$, but since this only has the phi-feature person, T is forced to value the rest of its features on the DP in VP, inducing agreement of the verb with this DP:

(22) $[_{CP} [DI] \textbf{PP}_j [_{TP} [Phi-f] [_{DP}\textbf{expl}]_i [_{LocP} [_{\overline{DP}}\overline{\textbf{expl}}]_i V [_{VP} \overline{V} \textbf{DP} \overline{\textbf{PP}}_j]$

Being nonlexical, though, $Expl_{loc}$ cannot value the [DI] feature in C, and this forces the movement of a lexical locative constituent into CP for the purpose. Recall in this respect that in context-sensitive sentences [DI] is valued under pragmatic prominence. Elsewhere, I have defined pragmatic prominence in terms of explicit connection with the common ground— that is, in terms of which DP/locative can become the starting point of the proposition with the least retrieval cost (2017, 2019). If one adopts Valentina Bianchi and Mara Frascarelli's classification of topics (2010), the implication is that for the locative phrase to be the intentional base in LI it must be labelled as a (Background) Given Topic, a type of topic that, as standardly defined, refers to information that is contextually entailed and does not affect the conversational dynamics (see Ojea 2017, 2019 for an extensive justification of this):

(23) Near his house lies a buried treasure chest.

(24) From that conflict has emerged an interesting project.

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[6] As in the case of *there*-sentences, I restrict my analysis to locative inversion with nonpassive verbs other than the copula. I also leave out structures that involve directional inversion—such as *Here comes the sun*—since they are significantly different from LI both structurally and pragmatically.

Contrary to the standard situation in presentational *there*-sentences, the DP subject in LI can be definite: the locative phrase is referential and, since it serves to identify the covert expletive, this will also be understood as referential, hence not imposing a definiteness effect on its DP associate. The following examples are reported by Jong-Bok Kim (2003, 2):

(25)   Behind him came Eton Lad, who fluttered.

(26)   In the top drawer of her desk lay her letter of resignation from Jupiter Services.

Nonetheless, given the discourse-new status of the DP, indefinites are much favoured in the construction.

As in the case of presentational *there*-sentences, LI basically occurs with unaccusative verbs. In her seminal work, Joan Bresnan states that LI can only occur when the subject is interpreted as the argument predicated of another argument of the verb that expresses the location, change of location or direction (1994, 80). Many researchers have noted, though, that this strong requirement does not necessarily hold in all cases and that there is in fact some flexibility in both the type of verb that may head the construction and the type of PP that inaugurates it. This is something that the analysis put forward here also predicts.

Firstly, as expected by the selectional restrictions of LocP, the only condition for the verb is that it must be informationally light—that is, not contributing new information in the discourse—and have some locative component in its conceptual structure. As a consequence, practically every verb that expresses some sort of location may enter in the construction, provided it has been pragmatically emptied of its agentive meaning. The following examples are reported by Beth Levin and Malka Rappaport Hovav (1995, 224 and 239) (see also, among others, Coopmans 1989; Hoekstra and Mulder 1990):

(27)   On the third floor worked two young women called Maryanne Thomson and Ava Brent.

(28)   Beside her sat a little girl who bore a striking resemblance to Top o' the Evenin'.

In this respect, it should be noted that presentational *there*-sentences are more restrictive in the type of verbal head they allow for. This may have to do with the fact that the expletive *there* must already be present in the Numeration—the set of lexical items that are to be employed in the derivation—and, as standardly assumed, it is restricted to Numerations with verbs lacking an external argument. Besides, whereas in presentational *there*-sentences the feature [DI] is valued by the expletive under agreement, in locative inversion [DI] forces I-merge of the lexical locative phrase in CP; in other words, the locative is explicitly signaled as more relevant informationally than

the verb, even if this verb is not light in the strict sense. Arguably, these two aspects may be behind the higher rates of verbal choices in the case of LI.

As for the PP, according to the view maintained here, the strong condition is that it must be the intentional base that (re)introduces the DP participant in the scene. As (27) and (28) show, provided this holds, it does not need to be an argument of the verb or even express spatial location, temporal location also being possible (Birner 1996). Andolin Eguzkitza and Georg A. Kayser provide the following example (1999, 203):

(29) Suddenly entered the man with the black hat through the window.

Finally, the analysis proposed here also makes the right prediction with respect to the position of the subject in LI (Kathol and Levine 1992):

(30) In front of us walked Dana proudly.

(31) Outside the door sat a young man uncomfortably.

As (30) and (31) show, the DP subject tends to appear closer to the verb than the adverbial modifiers, which shows that, as proposed, it remains in its underlying position in the VP throughout the derivation. Thus understood, LI does not involve proper inversion, and this explains why the position of the subject is different from that of standard cases of operator-induced inversion: it excludes auxiliary *do* and the subject follows the main verb in analytic forms, as (24) shows. One could object that there are also cases where the subject appears rightmost in the VP, as in (32) and (33):

(32) Remember Robin? Well, into the room walked carefully… ROBIN!

(33) Into the room walked carefully the students in the class who had heard about the social psych experiment that we were about to perpetrate.

In these cases, though, the subject is prosodically and/or structurally heavy, a clear piece of evidence that it has been extraposed. Peter Culicover and Robert Levine, from whom (32) and (33) have been taken (2001, 292), use the term *heavy inversion* for these constructions, and argue that they follow a derivational process different from that of LI (2001, 291). Significantly, cases with discourse-novel and/or prosodically heavy extraposed subjects are also possible in constructions similar to presentational *there*-sentences, but are rather different to them in their derivational details (Milsark 1974; Deal 2009):

(34) Suddenly there flew through the window that shoe on the table.

Under the assumption that the grammar of English has some structural means to signal theticity of the type described here, my analysis has therefore unified the treatment of presentational *there*-sentences and LI structures as two alternative means to obtain a reading of this sort, that is, a reading where the intentional base of the proposition is a locative constituent and the DP subject is interpreted as an entity (re)introduced in the scene set by that locative, not as the entity the event is about. Thus, both constructions share the fact that they hold an expletive that serves to satisfy the EPP principle but cannot value the number feature of T. In both cases, T targets the more remote DP and induces morphological agreement with it:

(35) a. There still remains an important issue to discuss.
b. There still remain some important issues to discuss.

(36) a. From that conflict has emerged an interesting project.
b. From that conflict have emerged some interesting projects.

They differ, though, in the structural place eventually occupied by the locative category that values [DI]. Regarding the locative PP in LI, my proposal is that it is targeted directly into CP to value [DI]. This is not the standard view, since most research maintains that the locative first enters TP when moving to a final destination in the left periphery (see Stowell 1981; Bresnan 1994; Collins 1997; Culicover and Levine 2001; Rizzi and Shlonsky 2006, among others). Even though I agree that there is a link between the locative PP and Spec-TP, I do not think this link has a derivational nature, but rather an interpretative one, which is parasitic on the existence of a covert expletive in that position. As represented in (22), the locative PP in CP establishes an agreement relation with the null expletive in Spec-TP to identify it, so that it can be properly interpreted in the Logical Form.

According to this, a structural difference between presentational *there*-sentences and LI constructions is that the intentional base *there* in the former case sits in Spec-TP—from where it values [DI] covertly—whereas the intentional base PP in LI sits in CP. Two important predictions follow from this assumption. Firstly, since both occupy different positions in the structure, the preposed locative can coexist with *there* in thetic expressions, each of these categories performing a different role in the valuation of the relevant features; *there* serves to value the phi-features in T and to comply with the EPP, and the locative, to value the CIF [DI], setting the event in place or time:

(37) On the stage, there appeared a hideous creature.

(38) Near his house, there lies a buried treasure chest.

(39) From that conflict, there has emerged an interesting project.

Secondly, the construction with presentational *there* will be possible in all kinds of clauses—that is, it is not a root phenomenon in the sense proposed by Joseph Emonds (1969)—whereas LI will be impossible in clauses with no assertive force:

(40) a. That there has appeared a hideous creature on the stage is undeniable.
      b. If there appeared a hideous creature on the stage, what would you do?
      c. They denied that there had appeared a hideous creature on the stage.

(41) a. *That on the stage has appeared a hideous creature is undeniable.
      b. *If on the stage appeared a hideous creature, what would you do?
      c. *They denied that on the stage had appeared a hideous creature.

The ungrammatical status of the sentences in (41), as opposed those in (40), is related to the landing site of the locative PP in LI: it is targeted into CP, competing with an event operator that also moves *there* in nonassertive clauses in English and induces intervention effects of the type described by Jiménez-Fernández and Miyagawa (2014). Significantly, in Spanish, where, as argued above, the locative phrase sits in TP and constitutes an unmarked means of EPP-satisfaction, the translations of the examples in (41) are grammatical:

(42) a. Es innegable que en el escenario ha aparecido una criatura horrible.
      b. Si en el escenario apareciera una criatura horrible, ¿qué harías?
      c. Negaron que en el escenario hubiera aparecido una criatura horrible.

The eventual placement of the intentional base in the sentence therefore serves to explain not only language-particular differences between constructions, but also certain parametric facts that would be difficult to account for otherwise.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this article, I have assumed that the intentional distinction categorical/thetic is a universal of thought. Therefore, as I have discussed in detail elsewhere (2017, 2019), all derivations should involve an interface feature [DI] that signals the point of departure of the proposition and is subject to parametric variation. In discourse-prominent languages, it becomes an EPP feature and can be valued in the narrow syntax by a category that denotes a referential entity and becomes the logical subject—thus resulting in a categorical reading—or by a category that denotes a location and brings about a thetic reading where the DP subject is (re)introduced in the part of the scene referred to by the locative. Under this view, then, locative constituents—but not, for example, phrases expressing manner—may compete with the DP subject for the same structural position, with the word-order consequences that follow.

As the Spanish examples reviewed in section 2 show, the syntax of thetic statements in discourse-prominent languages involves a locative constituent placed sentence-initially and a postverbal DP subject. These are, significantly, the two defining properties of the English constructions I have analysed in this article, presentational *there*-sentences and LI, both of which have a clear thetic reading where a scene-setting locative (re)introduces an entity and reports the event informationally as a compact piece. I have therefore provided a formal analysis of these constructions where their syntactic properties follow straightforwardly from the intentional reading they are intended to transmit, a connection that, to my knowledge, had not been made before in the relevant literature.

I have proposed, specifically, that presentational *there*-sentences and LI constructions involve a language-particular category LocP that is included in the derivation only when the context forces a thetic reading—for instance, no D-sentences can have this form in English. LocP encodes the presentational function that these constructions have and accounts for most of their grammatical peculiarities. It also explains why the two constructions have so much in common structurally and why they are basically restricted to the same types of predicate. And last, but not least, an analysis of this sort connects presentational *there*-sentences and LI in English to equivalent constructions in other languages, thus showing the crucial role that informational features play in syntactic derivation crosslinguistically.[7]

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