

DEFINITES IN *THERE*-SENTENCES

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There-sentences in English fall into two types: EXISTENTIAL and LIST. 'Existential' *there*-sentences typically allow only indefinite NP arguments, while 'list' *there*-sentences accept both definites and indefinites. The reason for this difference is that the argument of an existential *there*-sentence is the NP itself, but the argument of a list *there*-sentence is the list, not the individual members comprising that list. Once this distinction is noted, only one restriction remains on the arguments of all *there*-sentences, namely that they be non-anaphoric in the sense discussed in this article.*

1. English has two types of sentences with unstressed *there* in sentence-initial position. The first type, exemplified by 1, will be called EXISTENTIAL sentences; these, as has often been noted, normally allow only indefinite NPs. The most common intonation patterns are as shown in 1 and 2:¹

- (1) There's a woman in the house.
- (2) There's a woman in the house.

The second type, exemplified by 3A, are LIST sentences; these often occur as answers to questions. They allow both definite and indefinite NPs, and have the intonation of a list—which may be either partial (in which case the intonation rises at the end) or complete (in which case the intonation falls at the end):

(3) Q. How could we get there?

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

(4) Q. What's worth visiting here?

* We would like to thank Nick Clements, whose observations at an early point in our study greatly clarified the problems to be dealt with.

¹ Throughout this paper, we use wavy lines above examples to show the intonation contour that we, as native speakers, might employ. This method of describing intonation contours is widely used in the literature (see Bolinger 1965 for some discussion).

A. There's the park, a very nice restaurant, and

the library. That's all as far as I'm concerned.

(5) Q. Who all has been in this room since closing time?

A. There's only the night-watchman.

We will argue that the second type of *there*-sentence is a subtype of the first; and we will explain why, typically, only the second type allows definite NPs.

2. THE DATA. Before explaining the distribution of definite and indefinite NPs in *there*-sentences, we must first demonstrate that our description of the facts is, indeed, accurate. As stated above, indefinites occur in both existential and list sentences, but definites only in the latter. In this section, we will discuss two apparent counter-examples to this claim, showing that neither constitutes evidence against our argument if we entertain a notion of SEMANTIC definiteness/indefiniteness, the precise nature of which is described in §2, below.

2.1. SUPERLATIVES. The first interesting putative exception is provided by sentences like 6, with the intonation pattern of 1, rather than that of a list sentence:

(6) There's the strangest bird in that cage.

We must point out immediately that NPs like *the strangest bird* have two readings.² One is the straightforward superlative reading, which singles out a particular individual by virtue of the fact that he is at the endpoint of some scale. The other reading is here called the 'remarkable' reading, and is more like an indefinite (6 means about the same as 7). This is because the individual referred to is not necessarily at the endpoint of its scale, as 8 shows:

(7) There's a very strange bird in the cage.

(8) There's the strangest bird in the cage. And there's an even stranger one in the back room.

Indeed, with words like *strange*, where *-est* attaches directly onto the adjective, indefinites are unacceptable (**a strangest bird*); but with words requiring *most*, both definite and indefinite articles are allowed on the 'remarkable' reading:

(9) There's $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} a \\ the \end{array} \right\}$ most unusual bird in the cage.

² Fauconnier 1975 discusses a third type of reading for certain superlatives—one which also sometimes allows *There*-insertion, as in *There wasn't the slightest chance that he'd show up*. As he points out, this is because this reading is semantically indefinite.

Naturally, indefinites are always unacceptable on the superlative reading:

- (10) The ostrich is $\left\{ \begin{matrix} *a \\ \text{the} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird in the world.

The interchangeability of definite and indefinite articles in NP's like *most unusual bird*, then, is a good way to distinguish the two readings; *in the world* as a qualifier singles out the superlative reading. We will show below that 6, with the intonation given above, has only the 'remarkable' (i.e. indefinite) reading.

In determining how these two readings for superlatives relate to *there*-sentences, intonation must be considered. There are three typical intonation patterns for such sentences. In the first, there is no final intonation peak, but only falling intonation on *bird*, with optional additional peaks on *most* and *unusual*:

- (11) a. $\left\{ \begin{matrix} A \\ \text{The} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird is in the cage.
 b. $\left\{ \begin{matrix} A \\ \text{The} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird is in the cage.
 c. $\left\{ \begin{matrix} A \\ \text{The} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird is in the cage.

This has only the 'remarkable' reading; indefinite articles are allowed, and *There*-insertion is allowed on both the existential and complete-list readings (try any of the variants of 11 in 12-13, where 12 is an existential sentence and 13A is a complete-list sentence):

- (12) There's $\left\{ \begin{matrix} a \\ \text{the} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird in the cage. ³
 (13) Q. What in the cage is for sale?

- A. There's $\left\{ \begin{matrix} a \\ \text{the} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird in the cage. ⁴

In the second pattern, there may again be various intonation peaks early in the sentence (depending on the form of the question), but the final stress peak has a fall-rise pattern. This pattern does not normally occur in plain declarative sentences, since these have falling intonation. It does occur in *there*-sentences, but only on the partial-list reading. The NP may have either the straightforward superlative reading

³ *There*-sentences with no context are meant to indicate the existential reading.

⁴ Sentence 13A seems to imply that there are also things other than birds in the cage which are not for sale. *In the cage* is part of the NP in 13A, though not in 12, and it is only the phrasing of the question that allows the stress peak to be non-final. Thus 13A really belongs under our third case—final falling intonation in a complete list.

(with no indefinite articles allowed, as in 14), or the 'remarkable' reading (allowing indefinite articles, as in 15):

- (14) Q. Which of these birds are for sale?

- A.
 a. There's $\left\{ \begin{matrix} *a \\ \text{the} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird in the cage
 b. There's $\left\{ \begin{matrix} *a \\ \text{the} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird in the cage
 c. There's $\left\{ \begin{matrix} *a \\ \text{the} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird in the cage

- (15) Q. Do you have any interesting birds for sale?

- A. There's $\left\{ \begin{matrix} a \\ \text{the} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird in the cage...

In the third pattern, the final stress peak always has falling intonation. This occurs in *there* sentences with the complete-list reading. The NP may again have either the straightforward superlative reading and no indefinites, or the 'remarkable' reading allowing indefinites:

- (16) Q. Which of these birds are for sale?

- A. There's only one I'd consider selling.
 There's $\left\{ \begin{matrix} *a \\ \text{the} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird in the cage. ^(world, cage)

- (17) Q. What birds do you have for sale?

- A. There's $\left\{ \begin{matrix} a \\ \text{the} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird in the cage.
 That's all. There's an even more unusual

one out back, but it's not for sale.

The following existential sentence, with the 'remarkable' reading, may also be acceptable:

- (18) There's $\left\{ \begin{matrix} a \\ \text{the} \end{matrix} \right\}$ most unusual bird in the cage.

Now, what can we conclude from these facts? First, our observation that the occurrence of indefinite articles correlates with the 'remarkable' readings, and their non-occurrence with straightforward superlatives, is borne out; this supports our contention that the former are in some way indefinite, and the latter definite. Second, straightforward superlatives occur only in list *there*-sentences (whether partial or complete); this supports our contention that only list *there*-sentences allow definites. Third, the occurrence of the 'remarkable' reading in both existential and list sentences supports our contention that both allow indefinites. The question remaining is: what is the connection between the intonation patterns and the readings for the *there*-sentences?

The correlation of the final fall-rise pattern with the partial-list reading is easy to explain. In a list, all items but the last may have rising but not falling intonation; and so if the list is partial, there will be no final fall. Conversely, unless there is a suggestion of incompleteness or questioning, lists and declarative (e.g. existential) sentences have no reason to (and hence do not) end in a fall-rise pattern.⁸ Similarly, the falling intonation at the end of a complete list simply indicates the finality of the last item and closes the list.

The early-fall pattern, as in 1, is the most natural intonation for existential sentences. This is because the NP immediately following the verb is the focused constituent; it has been moved there from initial position precisely because initial position and focus position are not generally very compatible, especially when the NP is indefinite. Locational phrases and other material following the NP (but not part of the NP) are outside the focus; they have no special intonation beyond a slight final fall. Of course, if nothing follows the NP, the falling intonation on the focused NP will also be a final fall. This is the situation in 16A, where *the most unusual bird in the cage* forms an NP: *in the cage* is simply the last part of the focused NP in this case (and in 14), and thus receives falling intonation. List sentences do not freely allow material outside the focused NP; hence in 17A, *in the cage* is not part of the NP, and can be used only if it receives a second focus under contrast with *out back* in the following discourse.⁹

⁸ They might also end in fall-rise if there were two foci, and if the earlier had falling intonation (see Pope 1976:141). This is not the case here.

⁹ Jackendoff (1972, §§6.7, 8.6) argues that, whenever there are two intonation peaks in a sentence, one of them invariably receives a fall-rise pattern (a B accent), while the other receives falling intonation (an A accent). One is the topic or presupposition, the other is the comment or focus, as follows:

(1) Q. What about John? What did he do?

A. John ate the beans.

B A

We agree with Jackendoff that this intonational-semantic match represents the only fully grammatical situation. But in 2, 17A, and 18, where the NP with the first intonation peak has a B accent and the second has an A accent, the first NP is not a topic, or presupposed material—witness the fact that it is indefinite. These sentences seem to have two comments—the first getting a B accent only by default—and no topic. The unnaturalness of the situation leads to the

2.2. RELATIVES AND MODIFIED NPs. Another apparent type of counter-example, often cited in the literature against the claim that existential sentences normally allow only indefinite NPs, is provided by sentences like:

(19) In England there was never the problem that there was in America.

This sentence, taken from Perlmutter (1970:243), is also discussed briefly by Kuno (1973:370). The reading we get here is existential. However, Perlmutter (241-4) (Relativization) accounts for 19 is underlyingly indefinite, and that definitivization (by Relativization) accounts for the form of the surface. This analysis is further developed by Pope (p. 14), who shows that whether the article added by Relativization is definite or indefinite depends on the meaning of the relative clause. Only when the relativized NP is anaphoric in the relative clause does the head become definite:

(20) Sam greeted me with *_a/the warmth.

(21) Sam greeted me with a warmth that was surprising.

(22) Sam greeted me with the warmth that I was accustomed to.

(23) Sam greeted me with a warmth that I have {^{*frequently} mentioned to never

you.

(24) Sam greeted me with the warmth that I have {^{*never} frequently} mentioned to you.

(Examples 20-24 are taken from Pope, p. 9). It seems clear that, in 19, one is supposed to know already what the problem was in America, i.e., *problem* is anaphoric in the relative clause. Thus, given Perlmutter's and Pope's analyses, 19 is not a counter-example after all.

Nevertheless, problems still exist with other superficially definite NPs that do not appear with a relative clause, and thus are not explained by Perlmutter and Pope; e.g.:

(25) There was never that problem in America.

(This example was pointed out to us by Sandra Thompson.) Such examples, however, pattern not like all other definite NPs, but only like modified definite NPs:

marginality of these sentences in isolation. But with proper context, this intonation pattern is perfectly suitable for such sentences:

(ii) Q. Why can't you finish that paper?

A. There's an inconsistency in the conclusion.

B A

And in our discussion of 17A we showed that a two-comment sentence of this sort can arise when contrast is involved. In fact, each of the four *there*-sentences we have given which have B-A intonation patterns—2, 17A, 18, and (ii) above—can be read in this way: the first focused NP (the first comment) is the argument of the *there*-sentence (the NP which, under a functional analysis, has been moved out of subject position by *There*-insertion because it is not a topic); the second focused NP (the second comment) is emphasized by contrast with some other NP which is presumably in the context.

- (26) *There was never the problem in America.
 (27) There was never the same/equivalent problem in America.
 Not just any sort of modifier will do, however. Note the strangeness of

(28) ?There was never the bad problem in America.

This could only be used in a discourse in which *problems* had been previously discussed, of which one particular type was labeled *the bad problem*. In the good examples, *problem* is being compared to some other *problem* mentioned previously in the discourse (witness the use of the demonstrative in 25, the choice of adjectives in 27, and a suitable context for 28). The *problem* itself is new to the discourse, while the *problem* it is being compared to is old. Why a new NP which is compared to an old one should be syntactically definite in these sentences is unclear, and could serve as the starting point for a separate study. The fact that concerns us, however, is that the new NP is, indeed, not semantically definite.⁷

3. THE EXPLANATION. Having disposed of apparent counter-examples to our contention that only list *there*-sentences allow definites, let us return to the problem of explaining why definites occur at all in *there*-sentences.⁸ One possible explanation, proposed by Miltsark 1974, 1977, is the following:

- (a) Definite determiners, as well as generics, belong to the class of universal quantifiers (as discussed in Chomsky 1975, esp. p. 101).
 (b) *There*-sentences do not allow universally quantified NPs as their arguments.
 (c) In list *there*-sentences, what is predicated as existing is the entire list, so that the quantifiers on the individual members are irrelevant.

While much of this argument is in the right direction, we contend that it is not universal quantification, but anaphoricity, which is the key to the problem.

We object to Miltsark's first point because universal quantification is not really the essence of definiteness, though it is usually compatible with it. Miltsark himself mentions examples like *John's arm is broken*, where John can still have two arms. In *John's coat is on the bed* and *John's daughter is in college*, it does not seem to us that these need to be John's only coat and only daughter. With generics, the

⁷ Examples such as these are called 'crypto-indefinites' by Miltsark 1974, who agrees with us that their semantic definiteness is open to question. A more serious difficulty, however, is posed by examples such as (i), below:

- (i) Today we must discuss the problem of ethical determination of who will get food first.
 (ii) There will always be THAT problem. So let's skip it, and go on to the practical problems of how to distribute food and administer emergency health care.

The key here, however, is that the *problem* under consideration is part of a larger set. Suppose that, instead of (ii) we substituted (ii'):

- (ii') There will always be that problem. So let's skip it, and go on to discuss the rewards of farming.

Here the second speaker would clearly be changing the subject. We know that *problems* were under consideration today, not just the general topic of food production and distribution. What tells us that *problems* were the topic for the day is the use of the *there*-sentence. What we have here, then, is not an existential but a list *there*-sentence, with only one item on the list.

⁸ Though definites are excluded from existential sentences, not all indefinites are allowed. In particular, indefinite generics are not possible (this fact is discussed below).

problem is even worse: the sentence *Man, like other mammals, suckles his young*, though true of man generically, is clearly not true of any individual MAN, nor even of every woman.

The second point in Miltsark's argument is fairly unobjectionable—though there are exceptions, and of a sort different from the exceptions to the definiteness restriction:

- (29) There are all kinds/sorts of problems with that hypothesis.
 (30) There is every reason to believe it's wrong.
 (31) There's every breed of dog at the show.
 (32) Virgins are either wise or foolish. There will be both kinds of virgins at the party.

The third point in Miltsark's argument also seems essentially correct; i.e. it explains why definites are allowed in list sentences. However, there is still a big problem for Miltsark. The existence of partial-list sentences is compatible with his argument that the incomplete and therefore not universally quantified list (and not its particular items) is the argument in list sentences; but the existence of complete-list sentences is not. In examples like 4A and 5A, all the items on the list (and there may be only one) are given, as shown by *That's all* in 4A. Furthermore, the implication is that the list given is the unique list, not just one of many possible lists. If any sort of quantification is going on here, it is surely universal. For these reasons, we reject Miltsark's proposals about universal quantification, though we accept his suggestions that whatever the restriction on *there*-sentences, in list sentences it applies to the list, not to the particular items on the list. These items may be definite, indefinite, universally or non-universally quantified, anaphoric or non-anaphoric, etc.

What is the restriction? We, too, must explain complete list *there*-sentences as the crucial case. These cannot be said to be incomplete or non-universal in any sense; nor, as we have pointed out, are they necessarily indefinite. The list given can be THE list, THE answer to the question. But it is precisely their nature as answers to questions that will help us explain the possibility of *There*-insertion with lists as arguments.

Positive answers to WH-questions may be definite; in fact (see Pope, §2.2), they MUST either be anaphoric (previously mentioned or otherwise known to both speaker and hearer), or else properly introduced and identified, so that they will be anaphoric in the future. Note that 33B and 34B are unsatisfactory answers, giving rise to requests for further identification:

- (33) A. Who was that I saw you with last night?
 B. A man.
 A. Obviously. Who IS he?
 (34) A. Who was that I saw you with last night?
 B. John Smith.
 A. Who's John Smith?

But 35B and 36B are satisfactory answers, since 35B is anaphoric (speaker B assumes correctly that speaker A has heard of or knows John Smith), and 36B gives proper identification:

(35) A. Who was that I saw you with last night?

B. John Smith.

A. Really? {I'd never seen him before.}

{I didn't recognize him.}

(36) A. Who was that I saw you with last night?

B. You don't know him. He's an old friend of mine named John Smith.

However, though satisfactory answers are usually anaphoric, they must obviously provide some new information (unless the question was rhetorical). It is as if every *wh*-question were essentially a *which*-question—a request to know which of several known (and sometimes even specified) alternatives is the correct one. The answering NP is not itself necessarily new information, but the CHOICE of answer is.

In the case of list sentences, then, *There*-insertion is allowed because the list—the choice of items—is new information.⁹ Sometimes the items listed would obviously be there; and it is only what is NOT on the list, i.e. the shortness of the list, that is the interesting new information—as in the following dialog, where two people have just discovered something best kept hidden:

(37) A. My God! How many people know about this?

B. There's me and there's you. That's all.

There are strong connections, and often only subtle distinctions, among the members of each of the two contrasting sets: on the one hand, topic, theme, presupposition, definiteness, anaphoricity, initial position, and old information; on the other hand, comment, rhyme, focus, indefiniteness, non-anaphoricity, final position, and new information. Old information and new information are probably the most vague and inclusive terms in each set; and, in describing a syntactic phenomenon, we prefer to use one of the more specific terms whenever it will cover all the cases being described. Definiteness and indefiniteness are certainly the most typically used terms to describe the restriction on *there*-sentences. *There*-insertion, viewed functionally, is a transformation designed to provide a dummy theme or topic—definite in form (witness the *it* in *there*), in initial position—in a sentence which would otherwise have none. The comment is moved out of initial position, so that it may be more strongly emphasized or focused upon. The comment material, as expected, is usually required to be indefinite in form. However, in order to rule out generics which are indefinite in form, and to allow certain super-

⁹ In the preceding discussion, we have shown that, in an answer to a question, the list of a list sentence is new information. Answers to questions, however, while they give us the most frequent contexts for list sentences, are not the only contexts; e.g.,

A. I don't have any friends.

B. Oh, don't be silly! There's John and me and

Susan and Peggy...

Here again, the items on the list are anaphoric, but the choice of the items is treated as new information.

latives which are definite in form, the restriction must be phrased in terms of semantic indefiniteness.

We propose that the term 'non-anaphoric' is the most accurate, syntactically testable, and revealing way of capturing this notion.¹⁰ Usually, an NP is considered anaphoric only if it has been introduced in the (fairly immediately) preceding discourse. But Pope (following Kuno 1972) also considers any NP to be anaphoric if it uniquely refers, even if for the first time in that discourse, to something known or familiar to both speaker and hearer.¹¹ As an example, imagine two people watching a girl splashing in a puddle. One initiates conversation by saying, *She seems to be enjoying herself*. The pronoun *she* has no antecedent in the discourse; but it is still anaphoric in the sense just indicated, and hence appropriate.

Most definite NP's, in order to be appropriate, must be anaphoric in either the narrow sense or this wider one.¹² Kuno (1972:270) says, of a sentence with the definite NP *John* as its subject, that it 'is grammatical because *John* has presumably appeared in previous discourse, and is thus anaphoric, or it has a unique reference in the real world, as would be the case when it refers to, say, the speaker's brother, and therefore, is in the permanent registry of dramatic personae'—in which case it again may be anaphoric. Using a definite NP which is not anaphoric usually throws the discourse off course. The hearer will typically object, ask that the missing identifying information be supplied—and, perhaps, ask why the speaker thought he was already familiar with the NP's referent.

Generic NP's, even those which are indefinite in form, also must be anaphoric in order to be appropriate. It is not hard to see why this is so for most uses of generics, when 'anaphoric' is understood in the wider sense—since generics uniquely refer to classes, which are usually large and common enough so that the speaker can safely assume his audience to have some acquaintance with them (see Pope, §1.1, for further discussion). One type of exception, as Kuno (personal communication) has pointed out to us, is provided by examples like:

(38) I want to tell you about unicorns, mythical animals that have a single horn.

Here the class of unicorns is immediately identified and properly introduced into the discourse, so that it will be anaphoric in the future. As with answers to questions (see the discussion preceding 33) and definite NP's (cf. 39), a generic so identified may occur with the same status as an anaphoric one:

¹⁰ Bolinger 1976 argues that *there*-sentences are used to introduce something into the conversation by locating it physically or psychologically. This claim about the functional purpose of *there*-sentences is compatible with our characterization of the restriction on them.

¹¹ The definition of 'anaphoric' used here is essentially identical to that of 'definiteness' used by Chafe 1976; he states that, with definiteness, 'the assumption ... is not just "I assume you already know this referent," but also "I assume you can pick out, from all the referents that might be categorized in this way, the one I have in mind"' (p. 39).

¹² An exception noted in Pope (125) is provided by the unstressed *this* in sentences like: (i) I've got to tell you what just happened. This guy stopped me on the street and asked directions to the Trevi Fountain.

Here the NP *this guy* is definite in form, but semantically non-anaphoric. As we expect, it can occur in existential sentences:

(ii) There's this guy in a tree outside! Quick! Take a look!

(39) John Smith, an old friend of mine from high school, will be joining us later.

A crucial factor for anaphoricity is whether the speaker can safely assume that the hearer will associate not a unique referent with an NP, but the PROPER unique referent. It is in this way that definites and generics differ from indefinite specifics— which also have a unique referent, but for which the speaker does not assume that the listener will necessarily associate the proper unique referent with the NP. Thus, in the following contexts, a little sister could begin a discourse and tease her big sister with the imperative in 40, where an indefinite specific is used—but not in 41, with the definite specific, nor in 42, with the generic:

- (40) A man likes you. *Guess who!
- (41) The man likes you. *Guess who!
- (42) Men always like you. *Guess who!

This is true regardless of whether the generic is assumed to be anaphoric, or is introduced and identified:

(43) Men, who are male featherless bipeds, always like you. *Guess who!

Regardless of whether or not the hearer is assumed to be acquainted with the class, however, no generics may appear in existential sentences, where NON-anaphoricity is required. The fact that they are indefinite in form makes no difference:

(44) There are penguins, black and white birds, in icy lands, while there are flamingoes, pink birds, in tropical zones.

The NP's *penguins* and *flamingoes* here have only the indefinite non-specific reading, not the generic one.

With this wider sense of the word 'anaphoric', we can now give the relevant restriction on existential *there*-sentences by saying that only non-anaphoric NPs may occur.¹³ In list *there*-sentences, the list itself and not the items on it must be

¹³ Bresnan 1970 argues that pronouns, as in (i)—rather than identical NPs, as in (ii)—must be present in deep structure to prevent *There*-insertion from applying to (ii) and producing (iii):

- (i) Some students_i believe that they_i are running the show.
- (ii) *Some students_i believe that there are some students_j running the show.
- (iii) Hankamer & Sag (1976:399) claim that Bresnan's argument does not succeed. They believe the NP in question is underlyingly definite, as in (iv), rather than pronominal, as in (i):
- (iv) Some students_i believe that the students_i are running the show.

The definite NP, like the pronoun, would prevent *There*-insertion from applying. It could later be obligatorily pronominalized.

We have shown above that *There*-insertion is blocked by an anaphoric NP, and we believe this is the correct way to block (iii). It will also prevent *There*-insertion from applying to (v), a grammatical sentence where the NP in question is definite but not pronominal:

(v) John and Mike_i believe that Mike_i is running the show.

It will also prevent *There*-insertion from applying to (vi), where the generic NP may be pronominalized but not definitized:

(vi) Mankind believes that
}

 it
 mankind
 *the mankind

}
 is running the show.

Thus we believe that the approaches of Bresnan and of Hankamer & Sag are both incorrect.

non-anaphoric. But if the term 'non-anaphoric' is to apply to lists as well as to simple NPs, the term requires still further explication, if not replacement by some vaguer term. For a list to be non-anaphoric, some aspect of it must be unknown— must be new information, e.g. the choice of members or the number of members. This view of list sentences is a step toward a unified functional explanation of all *there*-sentences.¹⁴

4. IMPLICATIONS. Our analysis of *there*-sentences offers two major proposals. One is that the notion of anaphoricity discussed here is the key to describing the restrictions on the possible arguments of *there*-sentences, rather than the definite/indefinite distinction. Many linguists have noted that generics and definites behave similarly with respect to various syntactic phenomena,¹⁵ while indefinites behave differently. Our present analysis predicts that the relevant factor for these syntactic phenomena is anaphoricity vs. non-anaphoricity, and not definiteness vs. indefiniteness. This prediction is borne out for French *il y a* constructions as analysed by Canning 1977, who arrives independently at conclusions strikingly similar to ours here.

Our second major proposal is that, by separating the phenomenon of *there*-sentences into two groups (existential vs. list sentences), the same restriction of non-anaphoricity can be shown to apply to both. We would like to suggest that

¹⁴ Although the non-anaphoricity restriction explains why *there* occurs with lists, list sentences are unlike existential sentences in that the restriction explains very few other syntactic characteristics of the sentence type. Basically, the fact that these are lists is much more important. Hankamer 1973 makes several observations about how list sentences differ from existential ones; and we have listed these observations below, along with exceptions to each generalization. We feel that these generalizations and the exceptions can be rather naturally explained by the fact that the items are supplied as a list of suggestions or of (some of) the possible answers to a particular question. The non-anaphoricity restriction is largely irrelevant:

Gen.: Sentence negation is not allowed.

Ex.: Q. What is there to go to around here?

A. *There isn't the vaudeville show.

But: Q. What is there to see around here?

A. ?Well, there isn't the Washington Monument anymore—that was swept away in the flood.

Gen.: Presentational verbs aren't allowed.

Ex.: Q. Who is in this scene?

A. *There arrive the ambassadors from Chad and Niger.

But: Q. What's left of the old city?

A. There remain only the Mormon church and the granary.

Gen.: Certain tenses (future, perfect) are not allowed.

Ex.: Q. How will we get there?

A. *There will be the next bus soon.

Q. What has he worn?

A. ?*There has been the wig in the closet.

But: Q. What will there be to see in London?

A. There'll be the Tower of London, St. Paul's, and much more.

Q. What families have ruled England?

A. There have been the Plantagenets, the Tudors, and the Stuarts.

¹⁵ See Postal 1966 for examples of such phenomena; and see Kuro 1973 (Ch. 28) for a discussion of existential sentences in many languages.

this type of analysis can be fruitfully applied to many other syntactic phenomena, particularly to presentative sentences of many types (as discussed in Bolinger 1976 and Kuno 1973). Let us look very briefly at two in particular.

In French, the transformation of NP-extraposition (as discussed in Kayne 1975 and Rebsstus 1976 among others) applies to indefinite NPs but not definite ones (basically our non-anaphoricity restriction) EXCEPT IN LIST SENTENCES, where both types of NP may appear:

(45) a. *Beaucoup d'invités arrivent.*

[—definite]

b. *Il arrive beaucoup d'invités.*

'A lot of guests are arriving.'

(46) a. *L'autobus passera bientôt.*

[+definite]

b. **Il passera l'autobus bientôt.*

'The bus will pass soon.'

(47) A. *Qu'est ce qui reste de la cité?*

'What remains of the city?'

B. *Il reste seulement la Tour Eiffel.*

[+definite]

'Only the Eiffel Tower remains.'

In 47B, since it is the list which must be non-anaphoric, and not the items on it, definites are allowed. Let us point out that NP-Extraposition in French is very similar to *There*-insertion in English: both apply only with certain intransitive verbs; and both wind up with the underlying subject to the right of the verb, and a dummy-subject definite form in the surface. Thus our explanation for why the non-anaphoricity restriction exists for the English construction may well explain the same restriction for the French construction.

Second, English *have* can appear in the construction in 48 (discussed by Kuno 1973:367; he attributes the observation to David Perlmutter). That is, *have* is followed by indefinite NPs but not definite ones—again, our non-anaphoricity restriction:

(48) New York has many high-rise buildings in it.

(49) *New York has my house in it.

For some people, however, 49 is acceptable in list-sentence contexts such as answers to questions:

(50) Q. What's so special about New York?

A. Well, New York has my house in it, for one thing.

(This example is Frank Humphrey's, personal communication.) The fact that the choice of answer is non-anaphoric seems to make the difference.

Of course, since we have made no detailed study of constructions other than *there*-sentences in English, we can only suggest extensions of our analysis to these other phenomena, and we must leave further research to our readers.

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