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ON EXISTENTIAL BARE PLURAL ‘SUBJECTS’: THEY DON’T EXIST!

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Abstract

Drawing on Strawson’s (1971) definition of the subject as performing the function of identifying the object of the speaker’s assertion and of the predicate as applying to this object without having to identify it, this article argues that being a predicate and being (part of) the focus are two ways of talking about one and the same thing, namely assertion, and not identification or presupposition. Assuming that syntax and semantics are isomorphic, the most far-reaching consequence of this view and the central claim that I make is that there are no existential bare plural subjects. What is generally and *a priori* taken to be an existential bare plural subject is a (*wh*-moved) predicate nominal. The genuine external argument in sentences with existential bare plurals in what appears to be the subject position is in fact the Davidsonian event argument. Consequently, the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) should be defined as a requirement on predication. The syntax-semantics isomorphism is emphasized as part of an attempt to show that syntactically, generic and existential bare plurals differ with respect to the D-feature: while generic bare plurals are DPs with a morphologically null D, existential bare plurals, like bare singulars, are NPs altogether lacking a D-projection.

1. Introduction¹

Recent (and not so recent) research seems to unanimously agree that at least one type of bare plurals, namely existential bare plurals, are property-denoting expressions and as such are best represented as predicates, not as variables or restricted quantifiers (Dobrovie-Sorin & Laca 1996, Van Geenhoven 1998, McNally 1998, among others). Likewise, the intuition that on their existential reading bare plurals are marked as focus (in the sense that they are part of the focus domain, i.e. they cannot be topical) seems correct (Kallulli 1999, Cohen & Erteschik-Shir 2002). In this paper, drawing on Strawson’s (1971) definition of the subject as performing the function of identifying the object of the speaker’s assertion and of the predicate as applying to this object without having to identify it, I will argue that being a predicate and being marked [+focus] are two ways of talking about one and the same thing, namely assertion (and not identification or presupposition). The most far-reaching consequence of this view, which is not dealt with in Cohen & Erteschik-Shir (2002) or any other work, and the central claim that I put forward, is that there

are no existential bare plural subjects; what is generally and *a priori* taken to be an existential bare plural subject is in fact, also syntactically, a predicate nominal.² Crucially, I contend that while spatio-temporal particulars are routinely expressed by nominals, they need not be. Another claim that I make is that, syntactically, generic and existential bare plurals differ with respect to the D-feature; while generic bare plurals are DPs with a morphologically null D, existential bare plurals, like bare singulars, are NPs altogether lacking a D-projection.

The structure of this paper is as follows. I start with a discussion of countable bare singulars (section 2), with the goal of establishing certain parallels with existential bare plurals in order, eventually, to highlight some aspects of the latter that have long perplexed linguists (e.g. their scope behaviour). This section also presents some other aspects that have only recently started being considered, such as the status of existential bare plurals in terms of features that are said to encode information structure. Section 3 deals with the role and place of notions of information structure in current syntactic theory and more generally in linguistic theorizing. Topics such as the significance of Extended Projection Principle (EPP), subjecthood, predication and related concepts are also taken up here. The main unifying theme of these aspects is the conceptually appealing idea that syntax and semantics are in fact isomorphic, and more specifically, that predication – or some analogue of it – is at the basis of our linguistic reality and cognition, an idea already implicit in Williams (1980) (see also Williams 1997). In section 4, I further strengthen this idea of syntax-semantics isomorphism by defining distinctions with respect to the building blocks that enter syntactic computation.

2. Bare Singulars and their Relation to Bare Plurals

2.1 *The Basic Observation*

Across several languages of Europe, notably Balkan and Mainland Scandinavian (MS) languages, singular countable noun phrases exhibit a threeway formal distinction for the category of definiteness, namely: (i) definite noun phrases; (ii) indefinite noun phrases with determiners, which following Chastain (1975) I will refer to as *a-expressions*; and (iii) indefinite noun phrases without determiners, which I will refer to as *bare singulars*.³ This distinction is illustrated in (1) for Albanian and Norwegian, respectively.

- (1) a. *Ana do të blejë biçikletë-n.* (Albanian)
 a'. *Anne ønsker å kjøpe sykkel-en.* (Norwegian)
 Ann wants to buy bike-the
 'Ann wants to buy the bicycle.'
- b. *Ana do të blejë një biçikletë.* (Albanian)
 b'. *Anne ønsker å kjøpe en sykkel.* (Norwegian)
 Ann wants to buy a bicycle
 'Ann wants to buy a bicycle.'
- c. *Ana do të blejë biçikletë.* (Albanian)
 c'. *Anne ønsker å kjøpe sykkel.* (Norwegian)
 Ann wants to buy bicycle
 'Ann wants to buy a bicycle.'

While singular nouns with overt determiners may be clitic-doubled in Balkan languages and scrambled in Germanic languages irrespective of their definiteness feature, bare singulars cannot. This is shown in (2) for Albanian and German, respectively. Doubled and scrambled bare singulars are ungrammatical in all contexts.

- (2) a. *An-a donte t-(*a) blente fustan.*
 Ann-the wanted SUBJ-CL,ACC buy dress
 (Albanian)
 'Anna wanted to buy a dress.'
- b. *Ich habe (*Zeitung) nicht / im Garten (*Zeitung)*
 I have newspaper not / in the garden (newspaper)
gelesen. (Germ.)
 read
 'I have not read a newspaper.' / 'I have read a newspaper in the garden.'
- a'. *An-a donte t-(a) blente një fustan /*
 Ann-the wanted SUBJ-CL,ACC buy a dress/
fustan-in. (Albanian)
 the dress
 'Anna wanted to buy a dress.' / 'Anna wanted to buy the dress.'
- b'. *Ich habe (eine/die Zeitung) nicht/imGarten (eine/die*
 I have (a/the newspaper) not / in the garden (a/the
Zeitung) gelesen. (Germ.)
 newspaper) read
 'I have not read a/the newspaper.' / 'I have read a/the newspaper in the garden.'

Similarly, existential bare plurals cannot be clitic-doubled in Albanian (and Greek). Nor can they scramble in German (and Dutch), unless they are contrastively focussed (Abraham 2004). These facts are illustrated in (3a) for Albanian and (3b,c,d) for German.⁴

- (3) a. *An-a nuk (*i) lexoi gazeta.*
 Ann-the not themCL read newspapers
 b. *Anna hat nicht Zeitungen gelesen.*
 Anna has not newspapers read
 c. **Anna hat Zeitungen nicht gelesen.*
 Anna has newspapers not read
 ‘Anna hasn’t read newspapers.’
 d. *Anna hat ZEITUNGEN nicht gelesen, aber BÜCHER*
 Anna has newspapers not read but books
schon.
 yes
 ‘Anna hasn’t read newspapers but books.’

The question of why bare singulars and existential bare plurals cannot be doubled and/or scrambled is legitimate. I propose that the impossibility of doubling and scrambling bare singulars and existential bare plurals is due to feature mismatch between the clitic head (which, following Sportiche 1995, is overt in the case of doubling and covert in the case of scrambling) and the direct object bare singular with respect to the [\pm Topic] feature. While, as I have argued in Kallulli (1999, 2000), clitics are operators that license topichood, bare singulars and existential bare plurals are invariably marked as [+Focus], i.e. they are [-Topic].⁵

2.2 Clitic Doubling and Topichood

2.2.1 Motivating [+Topic] as a syntactic feature

It is a long-established tradition in generative grammar to regard focus as a syntactic feature on phrases, interpretable both at the LF and the PF interfaces as [+Focus] (Chomsky 1972, Jackendoff 1972, Rochemont 1986, Horvath 1986, Brody 1990). In view of the fact that a sentence may lack a topic (e.g. so-called *out-of-the-blue* sentences) but will always have a focus, it seems sensible to assume that the [+Focus] feature is in fact the unmarked value in a markedness theory for natural language and that its complement, i.e. the [-Focus] feature, is the marked value. Derivational syntax, in the guise of checking theory (Chomsky 1995), then renders this feature significant. In other words, topics need to be licensed (see also Schwarzschild 1999 for a discussion relevant to this point).

2.2.2 Evidence that clitics license topichood

First, as I have discussed in previous work (Kallulli 1999, 2000, 2001), felicity tests show that clitic doubling of phrases that are part of the focus domain is impossible. The sentence in (4a), where the object is not doubled, is a felicitous answer to either (5a) or (5b), but not to (5c) or (5d). Crucially, (4b), the clitic-doubled version of (4a), may only be a felicitous reply to (5c,d) but not to (5a,b).

- (4) a. *An-a lexoi libr-in.*
 Ana-the_{NOM} read book-the_{ACC}
 ‘Ann read the book.’
- b. *An-a e lexoi libr-in.*
 Ana-the_{NOM} CL,ACC,3S read book-the_{ACC}
 ‘Ann did read the book.’ or ‘It was Ann who read the book.’
- (5) a. What did Ana do?
 b. What did Ana read?
 c. Who read the book?
 d. What did Ana do to/with the book?

Second, if direct object clitics license non-focussing of the DPs they double, *ceteris paribus* we expect doubling clitics to be unable to associate with interrogative words under the standard view that *wh*-words are foci. The example in (6) shows that this is indeed the case.⁶

- (6) *Kë/çfarë (*e) pe?*
 [who/what]_{ACC} CL,ACC saw-you
 ‘Who/what did you see?’

Here is yet another argument supporting the view that doubling is incompatible with [+Focus]. As has been widely acknowledged in the literature, a hallmark of topical expressions is that they presuppose their descriptive content. Stated differently, topics represent some sort of background information (Chomsky 1972, Reinhart 1982, among many others). In fact, Chomsky (1972) considers presupposition to be the counterpart of focus. In their study of factivity, Kiparsky & Kiparsky (1970) define factivity in terms of presupposition. They argue that the so-called factive verbs differ from non-factive ones in that the truth of the CP-complements of the former is presupposed, whereas the truth of the CP-complements of the latter is asserted. Consider the sentences in (7) and (8).

- (7) I regretted that John left (*but in fact he didn’t).

- (8) I believed that John left (but in fact he didn't).

The verb *regret* in (7) is factive as the truth of its CP-complement is presupposed. In other words, the sentence in (7) is incompatible with a state of affairs in which John didn't leave. In contrast, the verb *believe* in (8) is non-factive; the truth of its CP-complement is not presupposed but asserted, therefore negating it does not yield a contradiction. Importantly, however, even with a non-factive verb like *believe* factivity can be triggered. Consider the examples in (9).

- (9) a. I believed that John left.
 b. Can you believe that John left? (*In fact, he didn't.)
 c. I can believe that John left. (*In fact, he didn't.)

The verb *believe* in (9a) is non-factive; (9a) asserts the belief of the speaker that John left. In contrast, *believe* in (9b) and in (9c) is necessarily factive, as its complement, namely *John left*, is taken as an uncontroversial fact in both sentences. It seems then as if the factivity of *believe* in (9b,c) is triggered by the modal verb *can*.⁷ Consider now the Albanian example in (10).

- (10) *Besova se Ben-i shkoi (por në fakt ai nuk shkoi).*
 believed-I that Ben-the left (but in fact he not left)
 'I believed that Ben left (but in fact he didn't).'

The verb *believe* in (10) is non-factive, just as in its English counterpart; (10) simply asserts a certain belief, namely that Ben left. Consequently, (10) can be continued by *but in fact he didn't leave* without giving rise to a contradiction. However, when the complement clause is clitic-doubled, as in (11), the truth of the proposition *Ben left* is presupposed, taken for granted, and moreover uncontroversially so, as is made clear in the English translation. In fact, the sentence in (11) entails that Ben left, as indicated by the fact that negating it gives rise to a contradiction, as shown in (12).

- (11) *E besova se Ben-i shkoi.*
 3 S,CL,ACC believed-I that Ben-the left
 'I did believe (the fact) that Ben left.'
- (12) **E besova se Ben shkoi, por në fakt ai nuk shkoi.*
 3S,CL,ACC believed-I that Ben left but in fact he not left
 left
 'I did believe (the fact) that Ben left, but in fact he didn't leave.'

Obviously the factivity of the clausal complement in (11) is triggered by clitic doubling. This is as predicted under the hypothesis that clitic doubling licenses topichood, since topics are necessarily presupposed.⁸

2.3 The Clausal Distribution of Bare Singulars

Longobardi (1994) observes that a singular countable head noun not introduced by an overt determiner may not occur in Italian in any of what he refers to as the “major positions” suitable for arguments, such as subject, direct object, prepositional object and inverted subject of either ergative or unergative predicates. He adds that this constraint does not hold for nominals in typical non-argument function, such as in vocative, predicative or exclamatory contexts (see also Chierchia 1998). However, direct objects may be instantiated by bare singulars in Balkan and MS languages, as we saw for Albanian, German and Norwegian. Bare singular direct objects are entirely absent in Italian and European Portuguese, with German and Dutch occupying a place somewhere in between.⁹ Finally, note that bare singulars are also found in a restricted set of predicative prepositional phrases even in English, e.g. *go to school/church/ market; be in hospital* etc.¹⁰ Crucially, bare singulars do not occur as subjects, as the examples in (13) demonstrate (see also Farkas 1985 on bare singulars in Romanian).¹¹

- (13) a. **(Një) grua u duk papritmas.* (Albanian)
 b. **(En) dame dukket opp plutselig.* (Norwegian)
 *(a) woman appeared suddenly
 ‘A woman appeared suddenly.’

There are, however, several cases that *prima facie* seem to contradict the generalization that subjects cannot be instantiated by bare singulars. The Norwegian sentence in (14) is one such case.

- (14) *Bil er dyr-t.* (Hellan 1986: 95)
 car_{MASC,S} is expensive-NEUT

However, closer inspection reveals that the bare singular in (14) cannot be the subject of the sentence, since in Norwegian, adjective phrases (AP) used predicatively agree with their subject in gender, among other features. In (14), however, the predicative adjective does not agree with what appears to be a bare singular subject: the form *dyrt* (‘expensive’) is neuter, while the noun *bil* (‘car’) is masculine. If the bare singular in (14) were really the subject of the sentence, this construction would be a counterexample to the regularity of agreement. This fact leads one to sympathise with Faarlund’s (1977) analysis

holds across Germanic languages, does not even hold for Balkan languages. As in Romance, in Balkan languages, generic readings are incompatible with bare plurals. Bare plurals in these languages get an existential interpretation only. Generic readings in Balkan (and Romance) languages require the definite determiner, as shown for Albanian in (17).¹⁴

- (17) *Libra-*(t) janë të shtrenjtë.*
 books-the are agr expensive
 'Books are expensive.'

Consider now the sentences in (18). Formally, (18a) and (18b) differ in that the direct object argument in (18a) is a bare singular whereas the direct object argument in (18b) is a bare plural.

- (18) a. *Eva hat gestern Zeitung gelesen.*
 Eva has yesterday newspaper read
 b. *Eva hat gestern Zeitungen gelesen.*
 Eva has yesterday newspapers read

Semantically, both (18a) and (18b) necessarily have an event-related reading (Krifka 1990). What then is the difference between them? I contend that the difference between (18a) and (18b) has to do with event reference. While the meaning of the sentence in (18a) can be rendered as in (19a) or (19b), the minimally different (18b) containing an existential bare plural instead of a bare singular can be rendered as in (19b), not as in (19a).

- (19) a. Yesterday Eva engaged in (at least) one newspaper-reading event.
 b. Yesterday Eva engaged in several events of newspaper reading.

Thus, (18b) entails (18a) but not the other way round. The sentence in (18b) can only mean that Eva engaged in several events of newspaper reading. That is, direct object existential bare plurals entail multiplicity of event reference. Strictly speaking, there is no 'small' event in which a person can read more than one newspaper at a time. Hence, it is as if the bare plural in (18b) scoped over the whole VP.¹⁵ My claim that existential bare plurals induce multiplicity of event reference is compatible with the claim by Cohen & Erteschik-Shir (2002) that existential bare plurals denote properties of pluralities.

Thus, I am claiming that existential bare plurals are the plural counterparts of bare singulars in the sense that they share the same basic meaning but differ with respect to the number feature and its various semantic ramifications.¹⁶ The question then arises why the distribution of bare singulars

is so restricted across languages. In view of the fact (i) that the meaning of bare singulars is a subset of the meaning of *a*-expressions (as argued in Kallulli 1999, 2000) and (ii) that they also share the meaning of existential bare plurals, it is reasonable to assume that economy considerations are responsible for the lack of (one-to-one) distributional parallelism between bare singulars and existential bare plurals within and across languages. That is, languages can afford to lack bare singulars (either altogether or in certain environments) because they have other means of imparting their meaning. In view of this, bare singulars and existential bare plurals are not necessarily predicted to have identical clausal distribution, among other things.¹⁷ What is expected, however, is that the (relevant) properties that unite or unify both are preserved irrespective of differences in their respective clausal distribution patterns. So the question is what these (relevant) properties are.

I have argued elsewhere (Kallulli 1999, 2000) that both bare singulars and existential bare plurals are property-denoting expressions, that is, they are LF-predicates and not variables or restricted quantifiers. Indeed, many empirical observations discussed in detail in these previous contributions (such as for instance their invariable narrow scope) fall out neatly from such an analysis. What I would like to focus on here, however, is yet another fact that I have not discussed conclusively in my previous work. This has to do with the status of bare singulars and existential bare plurals in terms of their so-called discourse function. In section 1, I stated that bare singulars cannot be interpreted as topics – note in this context especially the case of apparent bare singular subjects in sentences like (16). The very same statement is also valid for existential bare plurals in any syntactic environment, as has been argued independently in Kallulli (1999) and Cohen & Erteschik-Shir (2002). That is, like bare singulars, existential bare plurals cannot be topical. In contrast, generic bare plurals are always topical (or presuppositional), as Cohen & Erteschik-Shir (2002) argue. As Halliday (1967) noticed, his famous London tube example in (20) is – depending on the intonation pattern – ambiguous between what later came to be labelled a ‘generic interpretation’ and an ‘existential interpretation’ (Carlson 1977). Specifically, this sentence can be read in two different ways, namely as in (21a), where the verb is focussed, and as in (21b), where the bare plural is focussed. This intonational difference matches a difference in meaning, paraphrased in (22a) vs. (22b), corresponding to the generic and the existential interpretation, respectively.¹⁸

(20) Dogs must be carried. (Halliday 1967)

- (21) a. Dogs must be CARRIED.
b. DOGS must be carried.

- (22) a. If you have a dog, you must carry it.
b. What you must do is carry a dog.

Since this paper is primarily on existential bare plurals that seem to occur in subject position, let us concentrate on showing that these are necessarily focussed (or part of the focus domain). Consider the sentences in (23) when the bare plurals in them are interpreted existentially.¹⁹

- (23) a. Dogs are barking.
b. Firemen are available.
c. Girls know mathematics the best in my school.
d. In this village only women have blue eyes.
e. Volcanoes line both sides of the river.
f. Ancient figures are carved on the walls of this cave.

Under their existential interpretation, the bare plurals in (23) are, without exception, necessarily contained within the focus domains of these sentences, i.e. they are marked [+Focus]. Thus, when the bare plurals in (23a,b) are interpreted existentially, (23a,b) entail (24a,b) respectively and are entailed by them. And though opinions regarding what topics are vary massively, Reinhart (1996: 85) remarks that “[there] is one context all studies agree upon: the NP in *there*-sentences can never be topic”. This argument applies to (23e,f) too, which, likewise, entail (25) and (26), respectively.

- (24) a. There are dogs barking.
b. There are firemen available.

- (25) There are volcanoes on both sides of the river.

- (26) There are ancient figures carved on the walls of the cave.

That the bare plural in (23c) is a [+Focus]-phrase, is indicated by the fact that this sentence entails (27), a cleft construction.²⁰ And it is a matter of no dispute that the post-copular noun phrase in cleft constructions is a focussed constituent (Akmajian 1970, Higgins 1979).

- (27) It is girls who know mathematics the best in my school.

Finally, that the bare plural in (23d) is a [+Focus]-phrase is brought out by the focus particle *only*.

Other tests that can be used to establish the non-topicality of existential bare plurals involve felicity diagnostics (Diesing 1992, Selkirk 1995, Cohen & Erteschik-Shir 2002).

In sum, it may be stated that bare singulars and existential bare plurals share the property that they cannot function as topics in discourse. And just as for bare singulars, the fact that the existential bare plurals in (23) are unambiguously marked as focus is certainly in need of some explanation, all the more so because subjects generally seem to function as topics and not as foci in discourse. I deal with this issue in the next section.

3. Subjects, Topics, Predication and EPP

Strawson (1971) has been particularly outspoken in articulating the view that subjects are topics. Subjects, he argues, perform the function of identifying the object of the speaker’s assertion. Identification of reference presupposes the existence of the object about which something is asserted or predicated. Subjects are therefore presuppositional. As Strawson (1971: 79) puts it: “Identifying knowledge is knowledge of the existence of a particular item distinguished, in one or another sense, by the audience from any other”. The asserting part, on the other hand, is the predicate. Strawson argues that it is enough that the predicate applies to the object; it does not also have to identify it.

Let us consider Strawson’s view in more detail. The examples in (28) and (29) are taken from Strawson (1971: 26).

- (28) a. That is the man who swam the channel twice in one day.
b. That man swam the channel twice in one day.
- (29) a. Napoleon was the man who ordered the execution of the Duke d’Enghien.
b. Napoleon ordered the execution of the Duke d’Enghien.

Strawson argues that:

“(…) The differences between sentences in the (a) group and sentences in the (b) group [in (28) and (29)] can best be understood by considering the differences between the circumstances in which you would say ([28, 29]a) and the circumstances in which you would say ([28, 29]b). You would say ([28]a) instead of ([28]b) if you knew or believed that your hearer knew or believed that someone had swum the channel twice in one day [...], you say ([28]a) to a man whom you take to know certain things that you take to be unknown to the man to whom you say ([28]b).” (Strawson 1971: 26)

Further Strawson argues that:

“Now one thing that is absolutely clear is that it can be no part of the speaker’s intention in the case of such utterances [as (28b) and (29b)] to inform the audience of the existence of a particular item bearing the name or answering to the description and distinguished by that fact plus something else known to the audience, from any other. On the contrary, the very task of identifying reference can be undertaken only by a speaker who knows or presumes his audience to be already in possession of such knowledge of existence and uniqueness as this.” (Strawson 1971: 80)

Strawson says that the identificatory task of the subject is to bring it about that the audience of a certain utterance knows which object a predicate is being applied to of all the objects within its scope of knowledge (or presuppositions). More specifically, the phrases *that man* and *Napoleon* in (28b) and (29b) are subjects of these sentences if and only if they are uttered in a context in which the audience is antecedently equipped with the knowledge that the objects to which *that man* and *Napoleon* refer exist and are identifiable as unique entities. In other words, *it is a presupposition of existence of spatio-temporal particulars that enables predication on them*. So predication is necessarily an asymmetric relation, as argued for especially in Williams (1997).

Of course, it is possible to utter the sentences in (28b) and (29b) in a context in which the audience is not antecedently intended to be familiar with the existence of the relevant entities, but then, the phrases *that man* and *Napoleon* will not be subjects, but predicates. What the sentences in (28b) and (29b) would then say, Strawson argues, could be paraphrased as in (30a) and (30b), respectively, which come very close to how we tend to understand the sentences in (28a) and (29a). The reader can then see why Strawson chose the minimal pairs in (28) and (29).

- (30) a. There is a man that swam the channel twice in one day; that was that man.
- b. There is someone that ordered the execution of the Duke d’Enghien; that was Napoleon.

As far as (28a) and (29a) are concerned, they tend to be interpreted as in (30a) and (30b). When so interpreted, the phrases *that man* and *Napoleon* in (28a) and (29a) do not identify knowledge already available; *they only assert*, that is, *predicate* on the phrases that identify knowledge. The phrases that identify knowledge in (28a) and (29a) when these are uttered to convey the information given in (30a) and (30b), are *the man who swam the channel twice in one day* and *the man who ordered the execution of the Duke d’Enghien*, respectively.

Independently, Rizzi (2005) comes very close to this idea of Strawson’s, as reflected in his featural (i.e. syntactic) definition of topics and subjects under (31).

- Obviously, if the bare singulars in (16) and the bare plurals in (23) under their existential interpretation were subjects, this would be completely at odds with Rizzi's definition of subjects in (31b), since the bare nouns here are necessarily [-aboutness]. That is, predication in (16) and (23) is *not* about the (groups of individual 'snake', 'dogs', 'firemen', 'girls', 'women', 'volcanoes' and 'ancient figures', referred to by the nominals in clause-initial position in these sentences, but about the events described in these sentences. Specifically, the sentences in (16) presuppose a biting event, i.e. that Ann was bitten by something or that something bit Ann. Yet, they involve predication; they assert that what bit Ann was a snake. Similarly, the sentences in (23) are about events. That is, if anything at all is presupposed here, it is the events that these sentences describe, namely barking in (23a), being available in (23b), knowing mathematics in (23c), having blue eyes in (23d), the lining of both sides of the river in (23e), and the fact that something is carved on the walls in (23f). Still these sentences involve predication, namely that the barking is being performed by dogs in (23a); that being available is true of firemen in (23b); that as for knowing mathematics girls are the best in the (speaker's) school in (23c); that as for blue eyes only women have such in the village talked about in (23d); that there are volcanoes lining both sides of the river in (23e); and that there are ancient figures carved on the walls for (23f).

So my contention here is that while spatio-temporal particulars are routinely denoted by nominals, they need not be. In a sentence like (23a), the spatio-temporal particular (that is, what the sentence is about, presupposition or background knowledge) is exactly the barking event; the sentence simply asserts that the actors of this event are dogs. This is very similar (if not entirely identical) to Kratzer's (1995) idea that if a predicate has a Davidsonian event argument, this will always be its external argument.²¹ One argument that indicates that this idea might be on the right track involves what, for lack of a better term, I will refer to as a *non-agreement pattern*. Consider the sentence in (32).

- (32) There's students singing.

In virtually all work within the Principles and Parameters framework, the regularity of so-called subject-verb agreement is taken to be the fundamental diagnostic for a (syntactic) subject. And while agreement is indeed systematic, it is not ubiquitous, not even in English, as (32) shows. If there is agreement here, it certainly is not between the so-called logical-subject *students* and the verb. And it would be far-fetched to consider that the verb here agrees with the

expletive *there*, especially in view of the facts in (33) – note not just the grammaticality contrast between (33a) and (33b), but also that between (32) and (33b).

- (33) a. There are students singing.
b. *There is students singing.

I suggest that the verb in (32) agrees with the real subject of the sentence, namely the event argument *singing*. So (32) means that there is a singing event such that students are its performers. Note that this argument is not affected by the agreement between *students* and *are* in (33), since the fact that there is agreement between two constituents does not preclude agreement between two other constituents. It seems plausible that while in (32) the event argument is singular (or at best unspecified for number), in (33) the event argument is plural, one of the possible implications being that each of the students (or subgroup of the students) is singing a different tune, certainly a possible scenario under this sentence.²²

This idea that subjects are basically presuppositions (or topics) is very much in line with Kiss' (2002) suggestion that the EPP may be interpreted as a requirement that sentences instantiate a predication relation.

Crucially, however, while the events in the sentences in (23) may be presupposed, as I argued above, they need not be. One indication for this is that at least some of the sentences in (23) can, among other things, be uttered felicitously in so-called *out-of-the-blue* contexts, as in (34) below.²³

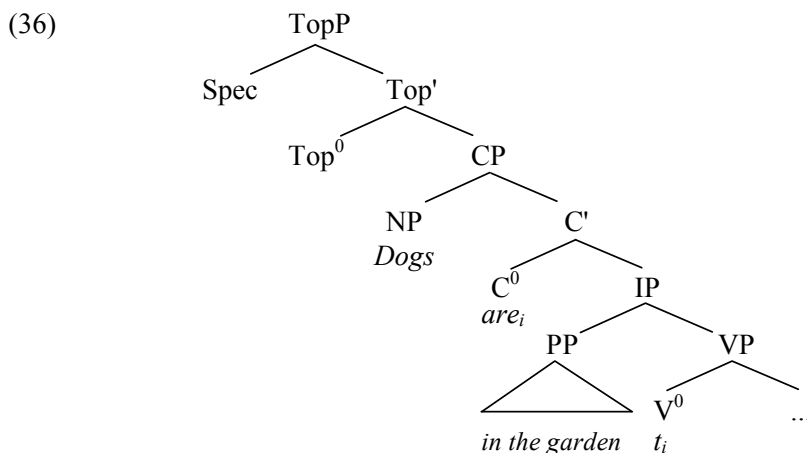
- (34) A: What's up?
B: Dogs are barking.

Whether the events in the sentences in (23) are presupposed or not, the challenge is to derive the semantic interpretation in a principled manner, i.e. ideally from differences in syntactic structure. That is, in a framework which assumes that syntax and semantics are isomorphic, as I believe they are, semantic differences should correspond to syntactic differences. That is, each of the sentences in (23) can be associated with different syntactic structures depending on more general principles of cognition.²⁴ With this in mind, I will proceed to sketch two alternative views on the syntactic structures associated with the given semantic interpretations. The unifying theme, though, is that the bare singulars in (16) and the bare plurals in (23), under their existential interpretation, are not subjects (not even technically), but nominal predicates fronted to Spec of (root) CPs.²⁵ This would explain among other things why bare singulars and existential bare plurals cannot be topical expressions: they occupy the same structural position as question words (i.e. *wh*-phrases),

practically characteristic of Spec of (root) CPs and widely acknowledged to be marked [+Focus] (Horvath 1986, Rochemont 1986, Brody 1990, i.a.).

But let me now proceed to a somewhat more technical implementation of the idea that the bare singulars in (16) and the bare plurals in (23) under their existential interpretation are fronted predicate nominals. Specifically, I propose that a sentence such as the one in (35) has a structure roughly as in (36).

(35) Dogs are in the garden.



Following Kratzer (1995), *are* in (36) is a stage-level predicate. Consequently, it has a Davidsonian argument, which I argue is merged in the external argument slot Spec of IP. The locative *in the garden* relates to the verb *are* by taking another occurrence of the same variable as its argument. Again, following Kratzer (1995), I do not commit to the precise nature of the Davidsonian argument; it may not be an event argument, but just an argument for spatio-temporal location, which would explain the quasi-obligatory presence of locatives in such sentences (Dobrovie-Sorin & Laca 1996).²⁶ What is crucial here, is that the existential bare plural *dogs* is not a subject, as it is not merged in subject position, where the event argument is merged. I would like to suggest that it is a predicate nominal in Spec of CP, but I remain agnostic as to whether it has merged there or ends up there as the result of the *move* operation. TopP in (36) is the topic phrase which, following Kiss (2002), hosts an EPP feature. That is, a subject needs to fill Spec of TopP either overtly or covertly. The overt manifestation of this is of course the expletive (*there*), as in (37).

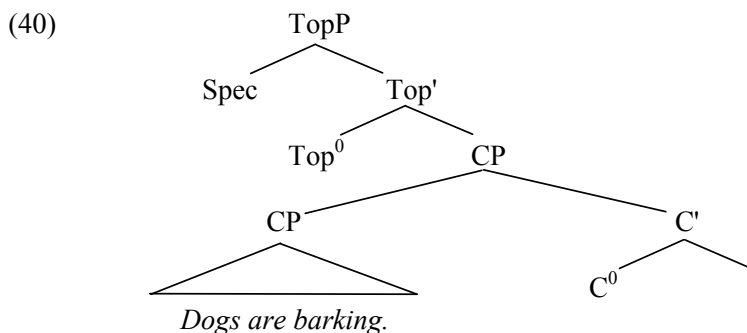
(37) There are dogs in the garden.

(38) a. ?*Honden kwamen de kamer binnen.*
dogs came the room in
(Van Geenhoven 1998: 177)

b. *Er kwamen honden de kammer binnen.*
there came dogs the room in
'Dogs entered the room.'

(39) *Mache meine Arbeit; giesse meine Blumen*
 make.1S,Pr my work; water.1S,Pr my plants
 'I do my work'; 'I water my plants.'

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But what is the evidence (if any) for the view that out-of-the-blue sentences are non-root clauses?³¹ The out-of-the-blue sentence in (41) is still a felicitous answer to a question like *What is going on out there?* In this respect, it patterns with the sentence in (41Ba), which also is felicitous as an out-of-the-blue sentence. Yet, as (41Bb) shows, in the context provided, the sentence in (41Ba) cannot undergo root transformations (Emonds 1970, 1976). But the sentence in (41Bb) *per se* is not ungrammatical.

- (41) A: What is going on out there?
 B: a. Hundreds of students are marching up to the Parliament.
 b. #Up to the Parliament are marching hundreds of students.

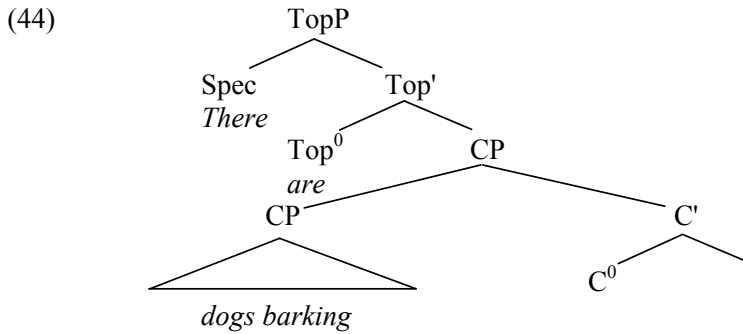
If the whole clause in (41Ba) is a non-root clause generated in the Spec of CP, as I claim, the fact that root-transformations cannot be performed is as predicted, because CPs of that kind are formally not roots. The example in (42) is yet another illustration of the same point, namely that root-transformations cannot be performed in certain sentences that can felicitously be uttered in out-of-the-blue contexts.

- (42) A: What are you guys doing this weekend?
 B: a. We are visiting only the most famous monuments in Vienna.
 b. #Only the most famous monuments in Vienna are we visiting.

I propose that the so-called existential *there*-construction in English is derived precisely from structures like the one in (40), by insertion of the topical element, namely the expletive subject *there* in Spec of TopP, which, as I argued earlier, is the topmost projection in a root clause. Once this topical element is inserted in Spec of TopP, the verb moves out of the non-root CP to Top⁰, presumably so that tense in the matrix clause can be licensed.

Consequently, the sentence in (43) is derived, as is depicted in the tree-structure in (44).

(43) There are dogs barking.



In sum, it may be stated that semantic distinctions reflect differences in syntactic structure. In the case at hand, semantically predicative expressions correspond to syntactic predicates.

A welcome consequence of this analysis concerns the identical clausal distribution of incorporated nouns (Bittner 1994, Van Geenhoven 1998) and/or so-called count bare singulars on the one hand, and existential bare plurals on the other, within and across languages.³²

4. The Internal Structure of Bare Singulars and Existential Bare Plurals

Longobardi (1994) proposes an analysis that aims at deriving the interpretive difference between generic and existential bare plurals from a difference in the (semantic) properties of the syntactic elements that the bare plural itself is composed of. Longobardi crucially assigns the same syntactic structure, namely DP with a morphologically null D, to both generic and existential bare plurals, with the D-head having different properties in each case. Following Kallulli (1999), I argue that while generic bare plurals are DPs with a null D, bare singulars and existential bare plurals are NPs altogether lacking a D-projection.

Börjars (1994) observes that bare singulars in Swedish cannot be modified by adjectives. She provides the example in (45) to illustrate this point. (The canonical order in Swedish, as in the rest of Mainland Scandinavian languages, is noun preceded by modifying adjective.)

- (45) *Oscar är *(en) skicklig rörmokare.* (Börjars 1994: 343)
 Oscar is a skillful plumber
 'Oscar is a skillful plumber.'

The examples in (46) show that bare singulars cannot be modified by adjectives in Italian either.³³ This state of affairs is not affected by the relative order of noun and modifying adjective. In (46a), the modifying adjective precedes the noun; this represents the canonical order of adjectival modification in Italian. In (46b), the adjective linearly follows the noun; this order is stylistically marked. Crucially, in both cases adjectival modification of a bare singular is precluded.

- (46) a. *Mio padre è *(un) bravo dottore / *(un) severo*
 my father is a good physician / a strict
direttore.
 director
 'My father is a good physician / a strict director.'
 b. *Mio padre è *(un) dottore bravo / *(un) direttore severo.*
 my father is a physician good / a director strict
 'My father is a good physician / a strict director.'

The phenomenon presented above, namely the impossibility of modifying bare singulars by adjectives can be observed also in Albanian, albeit partly. In order to understand what I mean by 'partly', a discussion of the Albanian patterns is necessary as they are typologically different from both the Swedish and the Italian patterns.

In Albanian, the canonical order that obtains between a noun and a modifying adjective is noun followed by adjective. This is illustrated in (47a). However, the modifying adjective can be fronted or, in more neutral terms, it may precede the noun, as is exemplified in (47b). The interpretation that obtains in this case is one whereby the noun phrase is unambiguously marked [-Focus]/[+Topic] while the adjective is not necessarily so marked; hence the given English translation. In fact, when the adjective precedes the noun, the latter may be deleted. It looks therefore as if the adjective in a way becomes nominalized.

- (47) a. *Ana lexoi gazet-ën e vjetër.*
 Anna read newspaper-the agr old
 'Anna read the old newspaper.'

- b. *Ana lexoi të vjetër-ën (gazetë), jo të re-në*
 Anna read agr old-the (newspaper) not agr new-the
 (gazetë).
 (newspaper)
 ‘Anna read the old one/newspaper, not the new one.’

While Albanian adjectives modifying definite noun phrases and *a*-expressions may be fronted so as to precede the noun, adjectives modifying bare singular nouns may not, as the examples in (48) show.

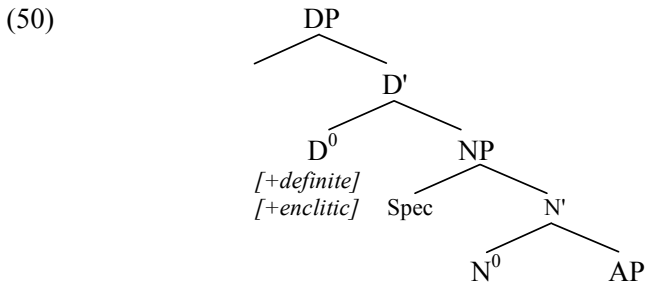
- (48) a. *Ana bleu gazetë të vjetër.*
 Anna bought newspaper agr old
 ‘Anna bought an old newspaper.’
 b. **Ana bleu të vjetër gazetë.*
 Anna bought agr old newspaper

The question then arises as to why adjectives may modify bare singular nouns but may not be preposed in Albanian. Similarly, why can’t bare singulars in Italian and Swedish be modified by adjectives?

As observed in (47) above, when the adjective precedes the noun that it modifies, the definite determiner, which in Albanian is enclitic, invariably attaches to the adjective, not to the noun. The example in (49) shows that the enclitic definite determiner cannot attach to the noun when the adjective is preposed.

- (49) **Ana lexoi të vjetër gazet-ën.*
 Anna read agr old newspaper-the

How then can the facts just described be accounted for? Suppose the structure of the Albanian DP is roughly as depicted in (50).



I propose that the order within the DP in (47b) is due to phrasal movement, not to head movement. I suggest that in (47b) it is the whole AP, not just the

adjective, that moves to Spec of DP. The question then arises as to what motivates such a movement. I claim that it is precisely the feature [+enclitic] of the definite determiner in D that triggers movement. The [+enclitic] feature of the definite determiner in D can be satisfied either by movement of N to D, as in (47a), or by movement of AP to Spec of DP, as in (47b). In both cases, the result is a phonological merger of the moved element and the definite determiner in D. This analysis explains why either the order in (47a) or that in (47b), but not that in (49), is licensed.

A number of empirical arguments may be adduced in favour of the analysis of Albanian APs outlined here. The example in (51) shows that degree words, which are commonly argued to occupy Spec of AP (Abney 1987), invariably precede the adjectives they modify when the latter are preposed, suggesting phrasal movement.

- (51) *Ana lexoi shumë të vjetër-ën gazetë.*
 Anna read very agr old-the newspaper
 'Anna read the very old newspaper.'

This account also answers the question as to why the order within the DP in (47a) involves N movement to D and not NP movement to Spec of DP (which would parallel AP movement to Spec of DP). Namely, if the order within the DP in (47a) were the result of NP movement to Spec of DP, one would predict that the sequence N-AP-D should be possible in Albanian. In other words, one would expect the N-AP cluster to form a constituent. The example in (52) shows that this prediction is not borne out.

- (52) **Ana lexoi gazetë e vjetër-ën.*
 Anna read newspaper agr old-the

Turning to the question of why adjectives modifying bare singulars cannot be preposed in Albanian, one may now state that APs in Albanian may only be preposed if a D-projection is present. If bare singulars are NPs that lack a D-projection, it is predicted that adjectives modifying bare singulars cannot be preposed in Albanian. The ungrammaticality of (48b) is thus explained.

At the beginning of this section, we saw that bare singulars in languages like Italian and Swedish, where the canonical order within the DP is adjective followed by the noun, may not be modified by adjectives. The same situation arises with existential bare plurals (Longobardi 1994). This is to be expected if adjectives in these languages need to occupy Spec of DP. In sum, it may then be stated that adjectives seem to be more closely related to the D position than is commonly acknowledged.

In earlier work, I have argued that NPs that lack a D-projection are predicates, not arguments. If there exists some systematic mapping between

syntactic structure and semantic interpretation, then one would expect NPs to pattern syntactically with adjectives rather than with DPs. The fact that the degree word in (53) can precede either the adjective or the noun without any interpretative difference only highlights the semantic similarity between NPs and APs in terms of type denotation. Example (53b) contrasts with (54b), where the degree word cannot precede a DP.

- (53) a. *libër shumë i bukur*
 book very agr beautiful
 ‘a very good book’
 b. *shumë libër i bukur*
 very book agr beautiful
 ‘a very good book’
- (54) a. *libër-i shumë i bukur*
 book-the very agr beautiful
 ‘the very good book’
 b. **shumë libër-i i bukur*
 very book-the agr beautiful

To conclude this section, it may be stated that there is evidence that a structural distinction between DPs and NPs straightforwardly accounts for semantic differences – a highly desirable outcome.

5. Conclusion

The main conclusions to be drawn from the discussion in this paper are that the EPP is a requirement on predication, as Kiss (2002) proposed, and that the event argument is the true external argument, as Kratzer (1995) argued. In addition, a variety of facts, to wit (non-)agreement patterns between subjects and predicates across languages and bare plural construction types, entailment relations, extraction (a)symmetries, adjectival modification, morphological asymmetries, clitic doubling, etc., converge in showing that what is referred to as existential bare plural subjects are in fact not subjects, and that, cross-linguistically, generic and existential bare plurals differ with respect to the D-feature: while generic bare plurals are DPs with a morphologically null D, existential bare plurals are NPs altogether lacking a D-projection. This in turn makes for a more principled mapping between syntax and semantics.

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Notes

- 1 My gratitude goes to Angelika Kratzer whose work on the argument structure of stage-level and individual-level predicates has inspired many of the ideas here. I also thank an anonymous reviewer for very helpful comments, as well as Arik Cohen, Marcel den Dikken, Joe Emonds, Kleanthes Grohmann, Irene Heim, Richard Kayne, Manfred Krifka, Georg Niklfeld, Svetlana Vogelee, Micha Wille, and the audiences of the Brussels International Conference on Indefinites and Weak Quantifiers, the MIT Syntax-Semantics reading group, and the ZAS Syntaxzirkel for their input. Research for this paper was funded by the Austrian Science Fund, grant T173-G03.
- 2 As I show in somewhat more detail in section 3, this is of course only true in a framework which assumes that syntax and semantics are isomorphic. While I strongly adhere to this conviction, in this paper I make no serious attempt to motivate this position beyond stating the common sense desideratum that a certain syntactic construction cannot be systematically ambiguous.
- 3 Without intending any controversy, in this article I use the term *Balkan languages* as a shorthand cover for Albanian, Modern Greek and Romanian, primarily.
- 4 Note, though, that in Albanian (and Greek), even contrastively focussed direct object DPs are incompatible with doubling. So the parallel between scrambling and doubling breaks down when contrastive focus is involved. In Kallulli (1999), I have explained that this is due to the fact that contrastive focus is fundamentally correlated with stress prominence at PF (Brody 1990). However, since clitics are incompatible with PF stress (i.e. marked [-stress], cf. Zwicky 1977), assuming Sportiche’s (1995) structural analysis of clitic doubling and the parameters that he establishes, the derivation crashes because of value divergence with respect to PF stress. The non-overt clitic head in the case of scrambling might however be totally underspecified for the PF stress value; as such, a [+stress] element moved to its specifier position in the syntax won’t render the derivation illicit at PF.
- 5 Two remarks here. First, relying on my previous work (Kallulli 1999, 2000, 2001), I assume that topic is the complement of focus. Second, throughout this paper the idea of a phrase as being marked [+Focus] does not entail narrow focus, but rather that this phrase is part of the focus domain (i.e. it is not marked [+Topic]).
- 6 One important exception to this expectation is that doubling of D-linked *wh*-phrases is possible. However, in Kallulli (1999) I argue that this state of affairs is only apparent and that clitic doubling of seemingly D-linked *wh*-phrases is restricted to (sometimes concealed) relative clauses (involving null objects).
- 7 I. Roberts (personal communication) observes that for the factivity of the complement clauses in (9b) and (9c) to arise, the verb *believe* must be stressed.
- 8 In fact, that topics are presupposed follows if topic is defined as the complement of focus (as in Kallulli 1999, 2000) and the focus is unique.
- 9 But see Schmitt & Munn (1999, 2003) on bare singulars in Brazilian Portuguese.
- 10 In English, bare singulars may also appear in conjoined instances. However, these are invariably interpreted as definites, as discussed in Heycock & Zamparelli (2003). Crucially, Heycock & Zamparelli’s examples can only be rendered by (morphologically) definite nouns in Balkan and Mainland Scandinavian languages.
- 11 As the anonymous reviewer points out, English bare singulars can occur as subjects in highly restricted circumstances, as in: *School is no place to relax*. Note however that *school* here is interpreted generically, whereas bare singulars in Balkan and Mainland Scandinavian languages are incompatible with generic readings. As I have argued in Kallulli (1997, 1999), generically interpreted nouns are syntactically DPs with a

morphologically null D, whereas, as I also argue in section 4, bare singulars and existential bare plurals are NPs altogether lacking a D-projection.

- 12 The same non-agreement facts also arise with (existential) bare plurals; see Kallulli (1999).
- 13 Personally, I would like to suggest that a lot of what goes under this term is actually hidden syntax, and I will hopefully convince the reader here of some specific cases.
- 14 This claim is however in need of some modification, since, as the anonymous reviewer points out, Italian allows conjoined bare plurals to be interpreted generically, and a restrictive relative clause may allow for a non-existential reading as well. However, abstracting away from these specific syntactic environments, the generalization seems to hold.
- 15 Krifka (1990) notes that, similarly, number words can have wide scope, as in his example *Four thousand ships passed through the lock*, which means that there were four thousand ship-passings.
- 16 The anonymous reviewer raises the concern that it is not clear that, truth-conditionally, negating the plural form allows for truth when one instance appears (i.e. either the plural is number-neutral, or the plurality is implicated/presupposed rather than asserted). The acceptability of the following piece of data in (i), where the multiple-event reading is enforced in the first conjunct through contrastive focusing, should however put such concerns to rest, if I understand the reviewer's comment correctly:
 - (i) *Ich habe nicht gesagt daß sie Zeitungen gelesen hat, ich habe gesagt daß*
 I have not said that she newspapers read has, I have said that
 sie Zeitung gelesen hat.
 she newspaper read has
 'I didn't say that she read newspapers, I said that she read a newspaper.'
- 17 This statement needs to be qualified. That is, even if bare singulars and existential bare plurals might not share exactly the same clausal distribution, it should not be the case that bare singulars occur in positions from which existential bare plurals are barred.
- 18 Several scholars (e.g. Brody 1990) have claimed that the presence of a [+F] (for Focus) feature shows up as heavy stress at PF. According to Brody (1990), the stressed [+F]-marked category is not necessarily the same as the [+F]-phrase, but the [+F]-phrase will always contain a [+F]-marked element. While he doesn't define the notion of 'heavy stress', I take it to be phonetic prominence, probably indicated by a pitch accent. Unlike Brody, and in line with Rooth (1996), I wish to leave open the possibility that focus may have other PF correlates even if phonetic prominence/pitch accent is absent.
- 19 As is well-known, sentences with bare plurals in Germanic (unlike in Romance and Balkan languages) are often ambiguous between an existential and a generic reading.
- 20 As the anonymous reviewer points out, there is some potential confusion in example (27), in which the bare plural is ambiguous between 'some girls' or 'girls as a class' (vs. e.g. boys as a class), and both readings are still present under focussing. I contend that the status of the latter reading is nonetheless existential. That is, under this reading of the bare plural, the meaning of the sentence in (27) can be rendered as: *The people/Those who know mathematics best in my school are girls.*
- 21 It does not, however, seem identical to Kratzer's idea since I am also treating predicates that are not typically analyzed as stage-level ones, such as *have*, *know*, *line*, and *are carved* in (23c,d,e,f) as introducing an event variable. Alternatively though, one could argue that these predicates are in fact stage-level in (23c,d,e,f) since it is feasible that after a while the trend shifts in that school, and boys rather than girls become the best to know mathematics; and that a boy with blue eyes is born in that village sometime in the future; and that volcanoes do not continue to line both sides of the river (if e.g. the river bed changes); and that the ancient figures carved on the walls erase with time.

- 22 I would however like to consider an alternative account for the contrast between (32) and (33b), namely that (32) is in fact a transitive expletive construction, the basic idea being that 's in a sentence like *There's students in this room*, is a clitic form of *has* and not of *is*. The problems with this view, however, are that if 's is a clitic form of *has*, then synchronically, we would expect the full form at least in certain contexts, but to the best of my knowledge, this is not attested. Of course, there is the possibility that the connection may be diachronic, and that *there's* < *there has* has been reanalyzed as a separate item, namely *there's* different from *there is*, corresponding to French *il y a* or Spanish *hay* (among other languages that use *have* in existential constructions). Note in this context that the transitive expletive construction (i.e. the existential construction with *have*) is also found in Germanic, specifically in Allemanic dialects (Cztinglar 1997). However, unless (earlier) attestations of the full form *there has* are found at some stage of English, the alternative account sketched in this note remains just a possibility at this point and a topic for further research.
- 23 However, this statement is not valid for the sentences in (16) with bare singulars in clause-initial position. That is, the sentences in (16) necessarily presuppose that there was a biting event. (While irrelevant for the issue at hand, this is so because of the presence of the doubling clitic; see the discussion in section 2.2.2.)
- 24 Of course, the two readings of existential sentences that I have discussed here are immediately reminiscent of thethetic/categorical distinction (Kuroda 1970 and related work).
- 25 In section 2, I referred to my analysis of bare singulars and existential bare plurals in terms of property-denotation. That is, both bare singulars and existential bare plurals are of type <*e,t*> semantically. Note that under the assumption that syntax and semantics are isomorphic, the distinction between subjects/predicates does not make sense if these notions are used to mean two different things across modules of linguistic representation. One of my goals here is to make compatible the notion of logical subject and subject as used technically in syntax (almost exclusively) on the basis of agreement facts. Here I am assuming, as is normal in the Chomskian tradition, that (compositional) semantic representation is a level of syntactic representation, that is, semantic representations are distinguished syntactically at LF. See also footnote 2.
- 26 Note that a similar structure (in that the PP occupies the specifier position of IP and saturates an EPP feature) has been independently proposed in Collins (1997) for the phenomenon of locative inversion, e.g. *Down the hill rolled John*, and more generally, for what may be referred to as non-nominative EPP satisfaction patterns.
- 27 Marcel den Dikken (personal communication) informs me that the sentence in (38a) is also bad in a narrow focus context, i.e. as answer to a question like *What came into the room?* It is however marginally possible in a contrastive focus context, i.e. something like *Dogs, not cats, entered the room*. In view of these facts, it would be interesting to inquire into the prosodic features of the focussed phrases in all these contexts with the intention of finding out whether these differences can be derived from phonological properties.
- 28 However, as the anonymous reviewer points out, bare plurals in (apparent) subject position are routinely used by newscasters, e.g. *Today in Tehran, demonstrators gathered to....* Likewise, the reviewer notes that at least some Norwegian speakers do not like existential bare plural subjects at all.
- 29 Note also that, although in a different context, Platzack (1987) argues that non-pro-drop languages may also contain empty expletives.
- 30 Thanks to Micha Wille (personal communication) for pointing out these data to me. These seemingly pro-drop phenomena are restricted to the 1st person and are therefore diary-style.

- 31 Note that the fact that out-of-the-blue sentences are conceived of as focus CPs is compatible with the view that the specifier position of root CPs is a canonical position for focus.
- 32 I have in mind two things here. First, both incorporated nouns and count bare singulars are confined to predicate nominal and direct object position, i.e. are precluded as subjects. Second, if existential bare plurals are the semantic counterparts of incorporated nouns (as argued in Van Geenhoven 1998) and/or bare singulars (as argued in Kallulli 1999), then their occurrence as so-called 'subjects' in sentences like the ones in (23) needs to be explained.
- 33 Many thanks to Giuliana Giusti (personal communication) for having provided the examples in (46).

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