A DIACHRONIC COMPARATIVE APPROACH OF EXPLETIVES (AND THE DEFINITENESS EFFECT) IN UNACCUSATIVES AND EXISTENTIALS

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0. This paper will argue that we can derive the difference concerning expletive drop and the definiteness effect between some old and modern languages by paramatrizing the way how the EPP [D] is checked and by allowing a further available subject position between AgrSP and vP. The data from the old languages is taken from different electronic corpora[1].

I. Comparing the diachronic development of English and French to Catalan and Spanish we see that French and English (1) show a definiteness restriction in unaccusative structures already in the old strata, whereas Catalan (3) and Spanish (4) do not. Furthermore Modern English (1) and Modern French (2) need an expletive in such a construction, whereas Old English (1') and Old French (2') do not.

(1)	a.	There arrived a man	(1')	Come a culur
	b.	*There arrived the man		(comes a dove)
(2)	a.	Il est arrivé une fille	(2')	Est arrivez plusurs reis
	b.	*Il est arrivé la fille		(is arrived some kings)
(3)	a.	La carta va arribar	(3')	no difference to Modern Catalan
	b.	Va arribar la carta		
(4)	a.	Juan llegó	(4')	no difference to Modern Spanish
	b.	Llegó Juan		

The definiteness restriction in ModE and ModF has been explained with Diesing's (1992) Mapping Hypothesis, i.e. syntactic positions are directly mapped to semantic interpretation and the observed definiteness effect in (1) and (2) are due to the low VP-internal position of the subjects. These are mapped to nuclear scope and therefore get a weak existential reading. Others have argued that the definiteness restriction is dependent on the expletive, if no expletive is introduced no definiteness restriction applies, if an expletive is introduced the definiteness restriction applies (cf. Silva-Villar 1998, Sheehan 2004). The SV/VS alternation without any definiteness effect is taken to be a characteristic of Null Subject Languages (cf. Alexiadou & Anagnastopoulou 2007, Sheehan 2009, among others).

The analysis put forward in Alexiadou & Anagnastopoulou derives the difference between Null Subject Languages (NSL) and non-Null-Subject Languages (non-NSL) by proposing that in NSLs [D] is checked by verb-movement to AgrS°, whereas in non-NSLs [D] needs to be checked by either a subject or an expletive moved into AgrSP. Furthermore, the availability of SpecTP explains whether postverbal subjects are placed in a VP-internal or VP-external position (cf. Bobaljik & Jones 1996).

II. Analysing OE and OF as a NSL, we should not attest any definiteness effect, not even if the subjects were placed in a VP-internal position. Analysing OF and OE as non-NSLs does not explain why the expletive isn't introduced to check [D] in AgrSP. With respect to Silva-Villar's and Sheehan's

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[1] The following corpora were used: For Old French *Nouveau corpus D'Amsterdam: Corpus informatique de textes littéraires d'àncien français (1150-1350)*, available at *http://www.uni-stuttgart.de/lingrom/stein/corpus/*. For Old Spanish the corpus by Mark Davis was used, available at *http://www.corpusdelespanol.org/*. For Old Catalan CICA (*Corpus informatizat del català antic*available at *http://lexicon.uab.cat/cica/* and Fischer (2002). For Old English the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose* (YCOE) available at *http://www-users.york.ac.uk/~lang22/YCOE/YcoeHome.htm*.

proposal it isn't clear why we see a definiteness effect even though (1') and (2') don't exhibit an expletive.

III. The data in (1' and 2') of Old English and Old French clearly shows that expletive drop is attested. The data in (5) and (6) show that an additional subject position between SpecAgrSP and vP is available which has also been argued by Biberbauer & Roberts 2003, and Zaring (1998).

(5)   a.   þei shuld no meyhir haue
                they should no mayor have
        b.   þæt he mehte his feorh   generian
                that he want his life save   (Biberauer & Roberts 2003)

(6)   a.   por coi avés vos ce fait
                why have you this made
        b.   les gens qui ont accoustumé a ce faire,
                the people who are accustomed to do this   (Zaring 1998)

I will suggest that expletive drop in non-NSLs seems to correlate with the availability of an additional subject-position between AgrSP and vP, and that the definiteness restriction is independent of whether an expletive is introduced or not. However, as soon as this additional position is no longer available, expletives need to be introduced in unaccusative constructions in French and also in English (see also Ingham 2001).

Building on previous proposals (Barbosa 1995, 2009, Bobaljik & Jones 1996, Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998, 2007, Pollock 1997, Kato 2009) I will argue that there is no EPP feature driven subject movement to a pre-verbal position in the consistent Null Subject Languages (NSL), instead I assume pro = phi min/max, i.e. *pro* is a minimally specified nominal whose unvalued φ-features are valued in the course of the derivation. In consistent NSLs the phi-features in AgrS are uninterpretable and valued and act as a probe, triggering long distance Agree with *pro* inside vP. In non-NSLs that allow the subject in SpecTP the phi-features in AgrS are valued in a local agree relation, the expletive does not need to be introduced. In non-NSLs that do not allow the subject in SpecTP an expletive has to be introduced in order to value the phi-features in AgrS.

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