

The structure and function of expletive *there* in pre-modern English

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Abstract. The frequency and positional distribution of expletive *there* are examined in a sample of 236 OE and EME prose contexts. These support an analysis whereby *there* stood in Spec IP throughout pre-modern English, though changing its function from being largely a first position dummy element to an EPP expletive. The introduction of Expletive Negative sentences (Ingham 2000) is argued to have made use of *there* as a pre-existing expletive. No stipulation is necessary to the effect that it coincided with the grammaticalisation of *there* as an expletive.

1. Introduction

The structure of English sentences containing *there* in its expletive or 'presentational' function has attracted increasing attention in the syntactic literature in recent years (see e.g. Chomsky 1995, Bobaljik & Jonas 1996, Basilico 1998). Various languages permit a range of expletive *there* -type sentences, which may or may not include Multiple Subject sentences. Certain Germanic languages allow such constructions, while others do not:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| (1) | Det | dansade en man i trädgården | (Swedish) |
| | | There danced a man in the garden | |
| | | 'A man danced in the garden' | (Falk 1989:47) |
| (2) | það | hefur einhver borðað epli | (Icelandic) |
| | | there has someone eaten an apple | |
| | | 'Someone has eaten an apple' | (Vikner (1995:153)) |

There is evidence that English changed during the course of its history from a language which allowed certain kinds of Multiple subject sentences featuring expletive *there* (Ingham 2000, Tanaka 2000) to a language which does not.¹ A construction that became common in later Middle English was studied in Ingham (2000) and is illustrated by the following, from Chambers & Daunt (1931).

¹ Though see Lyle & Gamon 1997 for the view that English still allows a sort of multiple subject construction in locative inversion sentences.

- (3) ... & þat þer sholde no vitailer bere office judicial
Appeal of Thomas Usk (1384) 37
- (4) ... þat þer schal no wardens make non newe statutz (1389)
Guild of S Fabian & S Sabastian, 89

The 'logical subject', i.e. the external argument of the lexical verbs *bere* and *make* in these examples, respectively, is a negated NP, which is accompanied by expletive *there*. We shall refer to this construction as the Expletive Negative (EN) construction. It involved the appearance of a negated subject NP in a position lower than the finite verb, but higher than VP, as exemplified by the main clause in:

- (5) There can no man reasonably gainsay but there was a king of this land named Arthur.
Caxton, preface to *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485), quoted in Breivik (1998:387))

We take it that the finite auxiliary *can* occupied INFL. The negated subject NP *no man* cannot have stood in Spec IP, since it occurs to the right of *can*. We also take it that the adverb *reasonably* was adjoined to VP. The negated subject *no man* cannot have been in Spec VP, since it stands to the left of *reasonably*. Hence linear position supports an analysis in which the negated subject in the EN construction stood in Spec NegP.

The development of Neg movement in English, i.e. the movement of a negated NP to Spec NegP, is discussed in separate work (Ingham, in prep.). In early 13th century prose, no EN constructions were found in a sample of over 100 negated subjects. It is plausible to account for this by saying that the EN construction could emerge only when verbs ceased to move to C in negated clauses. Until that point, the surface order *there* - V_{fin}-associate subject could not be generated, because *there* stood in Spec IP. But this cannot be the whole story: we did not find the surface order V_{fin} - *there* - associate subject in negated clauses either. If the only precondition for the EN construction were that the finite verb should have ceased to move to C in negated clauses, the absence of this particular linear order would be mysterious. In this paper we therefore wish to elucidate another precondition for the establishment of EN sentences in English: the availability of *there* as an expletive.

The status of *there* in Middle English is not yet clearly established (see e.g. van Kemenade 1997:336). It is well known that *there* was also used as a locative in OE and EME, as briefly discussed in Visser 1973:52. If *there*

was not yet available as an expletive in EME, this would clearly constitute another reason for the non-appearance of the EN construction before the 14th century. Just as obviously, however, we cannot simply assume that *there* emerged as an expletive in the 14th century at just the right time to play a part in our analysis of the EN construction. We must therefore address the question of when in the history of English *there* also developed the function of expletive, treating this as a separate issue in its own terms before we can see how the loss of V-C and the availability of an expletive might have been related. This paper reports ongoing research seeking to characterise non-locative (expletive) *there* in pre-modern English given the framework of recent syntactic theory.

It is well known that in contexts where we might expect an expletive, OE and early ME permitted some kind of null impersonal subject, e.g.:

- (6) ... ðæt godes huse dedafenað þæt his lof ... AE 582
'...that it befits god's house that his praise'
- (7) Bihofde nawt thæt swuch were leafdi of castel AR 58,7
'It would not befit that a lady of the castle were like that.'

We assume these structures should be analysed in terms of a null expletive subject. Consequently, one might suppose that English as yet lacked the requirement that subject positions with impersonal verbs be filled with an overt expletive. But the lack of an obligatoriness requirement is not the same as the lack of an expletive, since there are languages, e.g. Hebrew, which have optional expletive-like elements and yet permit null subjects:

- (8) (Ze) meanyan Se Dan kara et ha-sefer
it interesting that Dan read Acc the book
'It is interesting that Dan read the book.' (Hazout 1994:266)²

We take it that an expletive stands in a specifier position of the inflectional domain, as with *there* in PDE, whereas a locative is presumably adjoined to VP or to IP. What was the structural position of *there* in EME? It has been shown (see e.g. Vikner 1995: 185) that there is variation across languages in the position of the expletive subject. German *es* and Icelandic *það* stand in CP Spec in main clauses, since where inversion occurs with a topicalised element they are ungrammatical:

² Whether Hebrew *ze* should in fact be analysed in the same way as expletives in languages like English and French is controversial. Hazout (1994) argues that *ze* is referential.

- (9) Gestern ist (*es) ein Junge gekommen
 ‘Yesterday a boy came’
- (10) I-gaer hefur (*það) komið strakur
 ‘Yesterday a boy came’

However, *það* occurs in Spec IP in an embedded clause:

- (11) að það mundi einhver strakur hafa komið
 that there would some boy have come
 ‘that some boy would have come’ (Vikner 1995: 191)

Vikner posits movement of the expletive to Spec CP in main clauses to account for this. In any case, it is clear that if *there* was an expletive in early Middle English, there is more than one structural position it might have occupied.

A number of authors (Breivik 1991, Williams 2000) have considered particular aspects of the development of expletives in English - though Williams (2000) is principally concerned with the null expletive, rather than expletive *there* - without directly addressing this question as such. Breivik (1991) argues that *there* changed its function from ‘dummy topic’ to ‘subject NP’ in the course of Middle English. In this paper we preserve what we believe is the main insight of his analysis, but recast it in structural terms, attempting to locate existential *there* in a single syntactic position distinct from locative *there*.

Locative *there* appeared in a considerable range of surface positions in later OE and early ME main clauses, as will be seen directly. The variable surface distribution of locative *there* is unsurprising, given the flexibility of adjuncts in PDE and the generally more flexible word order of pre-modern English.³ We assign locative *there* to the following structural positions.

i) adjoined to IP:

- (12) For þere hie shulen hauen shame and grame
 ‘For there they shall have shame and wrath’ TH 173,22

³ We see no compelling reason to posit that a locative adjunct should have a single structural position, though in the case of time and modality related adjuncts this may be a worthwhile approach, as in Cinque (1999).

ii) left-adjoined to the VP - or AspP, see Han (2000) - containing a non-finite lexical verb:

(13) And he sceal þær abidæn sundfullice his martyrdoms
'And there he awaits his martyrdom whole' 12CHom 116,26

iii) within the structure of the VP:

(14) Elch bilefful man þe is þider iboden shal finden þære his buttle
'Each believing man who is bidden thither shall find there his city'
TH 185,12

(15) Gode wule unwreien þe þer
'God will excuse thee there' AR 308,9

In this paper we argue that existential *there* in ME was not an adjunct but an expletive in Spec IP. It did not occur in the adjunct positions we have identified above, but showed a distribution across a range of clause types that supports its status as an element in Spec IP.

2. *The study*

2.1 *Sources*

The issues addressed in this paper are whether the frequency of existential *there* depended on syntactic contexts, in what linear positions *there* appeared in those contexts, and what structural analysis of expletive *there* is suggested by these findings. In order to address these issues we have looked at a range of prose works from late Old English and Middle English. The most abundant prose genre throughout the period is that of religious prose, particularly homiletic works. The main study reported in this paper presents the findings from seven works of religious prose written in the later Old English and Early Middle English period: four complete collections of sermons, the homiletic treatise *Vices and Virtues*, a sample of the *Ancrene Riwe*,⁴ and a sample of Aelfric's sermons giving us a number of data points equivalent to those in *Ancrene Riwe*.⁵ Contexts directly translated from passages of Latin in the text were not included in

⁴Omitting one or two that were not in the Morton edition, used for the glosses which provided contexts as described in the text.

⁵This comprised the Preface - and sermons I-XXV.

the analysis. An overall total of 236 contexts for existential *be* was identified in these sources. This paper reports to what extent *ther* was observed in these contexts, and how it was syntactically distributed showed interesting syntactic variation. A further study looks at the occurrence of expletive *there* in about 40 *that* clauses, to obtain which a somewhat expanded range of source material had to be used.

We then go on to compare the late OE and EME data with a 14th century version of Ancrene Riwle, in order to detect whether *there* was changing its grammatical status after the EME period, or whether it roughly maintained the same status as before.

2.2 Procedure

It is sometimes problematic to know what counts as a context for expletive *there*, which even in Modern English is sometimes optional:

- (16) On the table (there) was a large book

Examples of contexts from earlier stages of English which could, but need not, be taken as contexts for expletive *there* are:

- (17) On sumere tide wæs micel menigu mid ðam hælende on anu
westene
'In summer time a great multitude was with Jesus in a
wilderness'
'In summer time there was a great multitude with Jesus in a
wilderness' AE II 394, S XXIX
- (18) On þis wilderne ben fugher lages Trin Hom 211,8
'In this wilderness are 4 lairs'
'There are 4 lairs in this wilderness'

We have supplied two glosses for each example here, to show that each sentence could plausibly be glossed with or without *there*.⁶ As a methodological tool, we therefore identified contexts for *there* by using editions with glosses in a more modern version of English, and taking only those cases where expletive *there* is used with an indefinite associate subject in the gloss. Admittedly, we were thus dependent on the whim or practice of the particular editors, but at least we avoided arbitrary decisions

⁶ In fact the edition used happened to gloss these examples without *there*.

on our part as to whether a given sentence was a context for *there*, and therefore made our procedure replicable. In practice, this did not completely eliminate doubt as to whether a given sentence was a context for expletive *there* because it was not always possible to rule out a locational reading for the gloss's use of *there*, e.g.

- (19) & thær bið egheslic toðene grind 12C Hom 126,18
 'and there shall be a terrible grinding of teeth.'

But the modern glosses were at least amenable to interpretation according to native speaker intuitions, which we could not apply to the original text. Cases such as (19), where the context provided a locative referent (namely 'Hell') for *þær*, were therefore discarded.

For our main analysis we used only main clauses, putting aside *that* clauses for separate analysis, and discarding adjunct clauses such as those introduced by *whon*, *forþi þe*, etc. We set up three pre-theoretically identified classes of context for expletive *there* in finite clauses with main verb *be*. The three contexts concern first the position of the 'logical subject' NP - what is sometimes called the 'existent' in an existential clause (Halliday 1994:142) - and secondly, whether a topicalised adverbial element preceded the finite verb. Each type has an affirmative and a negative sub-category, depending on the polarity of the clause. At each data point determined by the gloss, the type of context was identified in terms of these categories, and the appearance or not of a form of *there* was recorded. Depending on author and text, *there* was encountered in the spelling forms *þ*, *þa*, *þær*, *þere*, *þear* or *þer*. It was also noted where in the linear sequence *there* appeared, before or after the finite verb.

2.3 Results

We first show the overall results from the 236 main clause contexts for *there* established through modern glosses as described above.

Table 1 Frequencies of 'there' in affirmative existential main clauses

	X		Y		Z	
	+there	- there	+ there	- there	+ there	- there
Aelfric	5	5	1	16	3	6
Blick Hom	6	2	0	13	2	9
12C Hom	3	1	0	10	3	7
Trin Hom	0	1	0	12	0	4
Lam Hom	3	0	2	8	2	3
Anc Riwl	1	0	2	19	1	12
V&V	0	0	0	1	0	3
TOTAL	18	9	5	79	11	44

Table 2 Frequencies of 'there' in negative existential main clauses

	X		Y		Z	
	+there	-there	+there	-there	+there	-there
Aelfric	2	6	1	2	0	2
Blick Hom	1	5	0	0	0	0
12C Hom	2	7	0	0	0	1
Trin Hom	0	4	0	0	0	0
Lam Hom	1	7	0	0	0	4
Anc Riwl	6	11	0	2	0	2
V&V	2	2	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	14	42	1	4	0	9

Overall, *there* occurred in 49 out of 236 contexts (21.2%). However, its distribution across context types was highly skewed. Let us compare, for instance, the frequencies of *there* in affirmative X and affirmative Z contexts in Table 1. In the former it occurs in 18 out of 27 contexts (67%), whereas in the latter it occurs in 11 out of 55 contexts (20%). Furthermore if we compare affirmative versus negative X contexts in Tables 1 and 2, we find an almost equally lopsided distribution. In affirmative X contexts *there* is found in 18 out of 27 contexts (67%), as we have just remarked, whereas in negative clauses it occurs in only 14 out of 56 contexts (25%). Examples of *there* use in such contexts are:

- (20) þer beoð summe þe mare herm is.... LH 25,19
 there are some that more harm is
 'There are some to whom there is great harm'

- (21) þonne beoð þær six & dritig teoðing dagas AE 178
 then are there six & thirty tithing days
 'Then there are 36 tithing days.'
- (22) & nes þere non AR 260
 and not-was ther none
 'And there was none'

It is true that *there* cannot be called obligatory in such contexts. Examples of affirmative existential *be* clauses without *there* were:

- (23) ... and beþ muchel blisse among manen LH 177,18
 '...and there wis much bliss among men'
- (24) Wæron hyrdas on þam eorde AE 30
 'There were shepherds in the country'
- (25) Beoð fela frecednyssa AE 2
 'There will be many calamities'

Even so, the disproportion between the high probability of *there* use in affirmative clauses and the low probability of its use in negative clauses is very clear. In the next section we shall look at what sort of structural analysis might account for this finding.

In short, we find one context where *there* is very frequent, and three others where it is almost totally absent. Only two out of the six contexts, X (Neg) and Z (Aff), show a figure close to the average rate. These sharp discrepancies between different syntactically defined contexts argue against the possibility that *there* was an adjunct. If *there* was an adjunct we would not expect its frequency to show much variation across syntactic contexts, since adjuncts are licensed in sentences by the semantic role contributed by the adjunct, not by any other grammatical features of the sentence. But, as can be seen, the frequency distribution of *there* showed very sharp contrasts across syntactic contexts. This offers strong support to an analysis in which its presence in the sentence was responsive to grammatical factors, that is, it functioned as an expletive. Let us now turn to what those factors might have been.

3. *The structural position of 'there'*

In generative accounts of OE and EME syntax, the verb in a negated clause is generally analysed as moving to C, whereas in affirmative clauses it remains in I. If *there* was an expletive in Spec IP, its distribution in our data is for the most part straightforwardly explained. When *there* appeared in an affirmative clause, it is predicted to stand before the verb, and in a negative clause, to stand after it. Both predictions are overwhelmingly borne out. In affirmative X contexts, *there* always stood to the left of the finite verb, e.g.:

- (26) And þær wæron on þæm carcerne twa hund & eahta & feowertig
 'And there were in that prison 248
 wera. BH 239
 men'
- (27) þer beoð summe þe mare herm is þe gað... LH 25,19
 'There are some, more is the harm, that go
- (28) And þær wæs micel gærs on ðære stowe AE182
 'And there was a lot of grass in that place'

In these contexts the order Vfin- *there* - NPsubj was never found. But in negative sentences this is precisely the order that we found most of the time when *there* occurred:

- (29) Nis þer þeonne bute vorweorpen AR 120
 'There is naught but to throw away'
- (30) Nis ðar non swo god leighe se teares V&V 95,29
 'There is no lie so good as tears'
- (31) þonne ne beoð þær buton daghene þæs fæstenes
 'Then there are of the fasting days only...' 12C Hom 106,16

Occasional exceptions were found with *there* prefinite, e.g.:

- (32) Ne þer nes nan wone bitwuxen heom LH 91,21
 'There was no lack among them'

We are unsure how to analyse such cases as (32). Two of them were conjunctive clauses introduced by *ne*, which may have influenced the clausal structure in a way leading to non-movement of the verb to C. In any case, in negative sentences, it seems that sometimes either V did not move to C, or *there* could appear in Spec CP.

Let us turn now to the Y contexts, in which we can see from Table 1 that *there* was actually quite rare. It occurred a few times in affirmative clauses, e.g.:

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------|--------|
| (33) | Monie oðre þer beoð | AR 198 |
| | ‘There are many others’ | |
| (34) | Fif hlafas ðær wæron | AE 188 |
| | ‘There were 5 loaves’ | |

Most of the few cases that occurred show *there* immediately before the finite verb, and with a quantified NP preceding *there*. This is consistent with *there* standing in Spec IP, and thus preceding the verb in an affirmative clause. In a negated clause, *there* was predicted not to precede the verb if it stands in Spec IP, since the verb has raised to its left. This was indeed the case: the surface order 'Subj- *there*-V[Fin]' was absent.⁷

Finally, let us consider the structural position of *there* in the Z contexts, i.e. those where a preposed topicalised XP or short adverbial occurred. Nearly a dozen instances of *there* occurred in the affirmative subtype, some of which had *there* prefinite:

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| (35) | Git þær is oðer tacnung alswa | 12C Hom 36,5 |
| | ‘Yet there is another meaning also’ | |

But those with short adverbs such as *nu* (now), *tha* (then) and *swa* (so), had *there* in postfinite position:

- | | | |
|------|---|---------------|
| (36) | Ponne beoð þær six & dritig teoðing dagas | AE178 |
| | ‘Then there are 36 tithing days’ | |
| (37) | Swa beo þær maræ eadmodnesse | 12C Hom 130,2 |
| | ‘So there is more meekness’ | |

⁷ *There* occurs on one occasion in a negative Y context:

(i)	ne ðær nan twaenung nys	AE 40
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- (38) *Pa wes þere an mon Ananias ihaten* LH 91,29
 ‘Then there was a mon named Ananias’

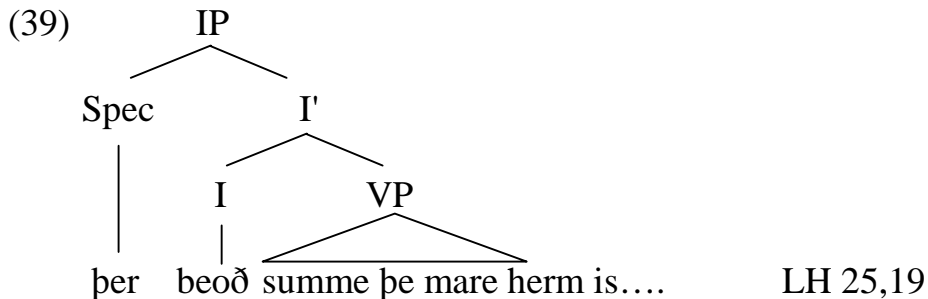
They were therefore consistent with a grammar (see e.g. van Kemenade 2000) in which the verb in an affirmative clause moved to C only after certain adverbs, notably *nu*, (now) *tha* (then) and *swa* (so). Hence they fall together with the negative sentence pattern of V-C and postfinite *there*. No instances turned up of *there* in a negative Z context; there was in any case only a small number of such contexts (N=9).

The distribution of existential *there* was quite unlike that of locative *there*. In particular, it never stood in postfinite position in affirmative clauses, unless V-C had occurred. That is, we did not find existential *there* sentences with a linear order comparable to examples (13) – (15) above. If existential *there* were an adjunct, we see no compelling explanation for this very restricted positional distribution. We therefore consider that it already had an expletive function in late Old and Early Middle English. However, we acknowledge that its presentational function was crucial to understanding when existential *there* appeared, which a structural account does not suffice to explain. The frequency distribution of *there* does not depend on whether the clause involved V-C movement. As can be seen from Table 3, *there* was almost equally frequent, at around 20%, in clauses with and clauses without V-C:

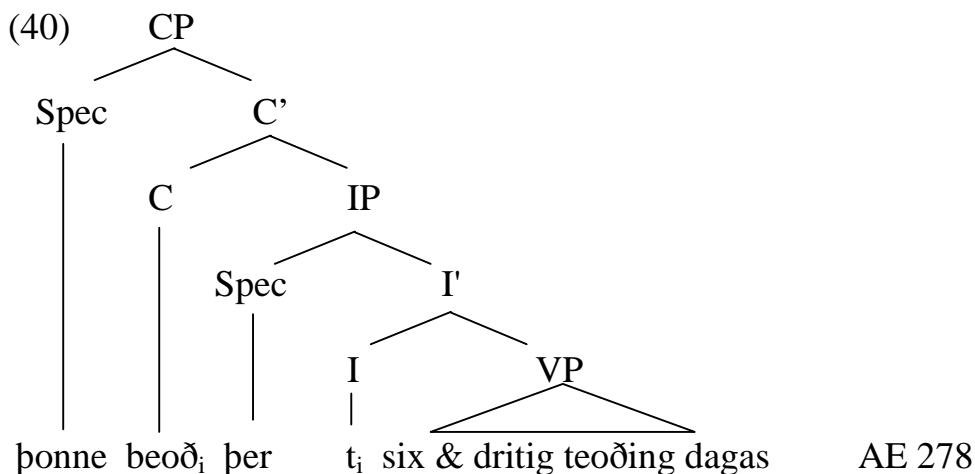
Table 3 Distribution of ‘there’ in V-C versus V-I contexts

	V-C contexts			V-I contexts	
	<i>+there</i>	<i>-there</i>		<i>+there</i>	<i>-there</i>
All negative clauses N= 70	15 (21.4%)	56 (78.6%)	All X aff. N = 27	18 (66.6%)	9 (33.4%)
			All Y aff N = 84	5 (5.9%)	79 (94.1%)
Z affirmative with short adverb N = 37	11 (29.7%)	26 (70.3%)	Z aff. with topic PP N = 16	0	16
			Z with initial pronoun	0	1
TOTAL	26 (23.6%)	82 (76.4%)		23 (18.0%)	105 (82.0%)

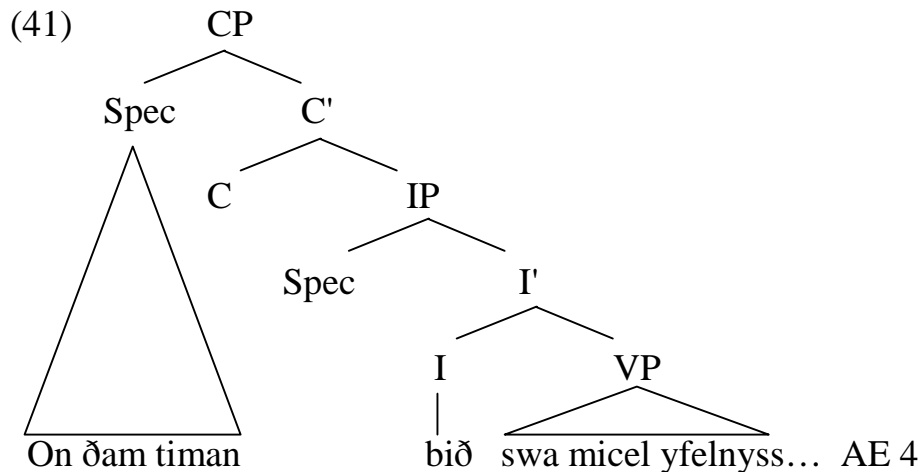
To account for the position of *there* in these sentence types we adopt the following structural analyses. In affirmative clauses, where the verb is normally in I, expletive *there* occurs to the left of it, in Spec IP:



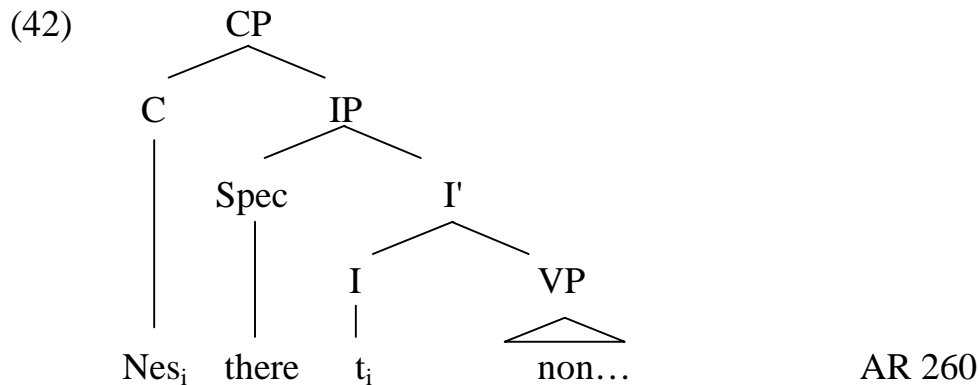
In affirmative clauses introduced by a short adverb such as *nu*, *þonne* etc, the main verb is in C, hence *there* never occurs to the left of the main verb in such constructions. If it is found, it occurs to the right of the main verb, e.g.:



Because *there* does not have its first position clitic function here, it is free to occur optionally in such sentences, and indeed is found at around the average rate of occurrence (20-25%). In affirmative clauses with a topicalised PP, the main verb does not raise to C. Hence if *there* appeared, it would stand to the left of the finite verb in Spec IP. However, as noted by Breivik (1991), it is not found in such clauses, since its presence would disturb the second position of the verb.



Negative sentences have the verb in C in all cases, hence if *there* appears it must normally be to the right of the verb:



Again, *there* appears at around the average overall frequency in this context because its presence is entirely optional: it is not serving the function of permitting the verb to stand second, but it is not interfering with that linear order either.

These four clause types, in which *there* is attributed a uniform position in Spec IP, account for 45 of the 49 instances of expletive *there* identified in our data.

4. 'There' in 'that' clauses

Further evidence that *there* was an expletive standing in Spec IP can be found in *that* clauses. Since the complementiser *that* stands in C and the finite verb remains in I, any occurrences of expletive *there* are predicted to stand to the left of the finite verb, on the analysis pursued in the present paper.

That clauses containing existential *be* are not common, so to increase the data base somewhat we searched for data from the whole of Aelfric's sermons, as well as the whole of AR and two other EME works, Seinte Katerine and Hali Meidhad. The last-mentioned text had no examples of existential *be* in *that* clauses, however. Table 4 shows the distribution of *there* and ordinary subjects (i.e. those denoting the 'existent' entity) in relation to the position of the finite verb in these texts:

Table 4 Distribution of expletive 'there' in 'that' clauses with existential 'be'

	Kat	AE	TrinHom, V&V	12CHom, BH	AR	total
Subj - V [fin]	1	14	1	5	4	25
V [fin] - Subj	0	1	1	1	1	4
X V [fin] S	0	3	0	2	1	6
<i>There</i> V[fin] Subj	0	4	0	1	2	7
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	1	22	2	8	8	42

Despite the enlargement of our sample, numbers are relatively small, compared to our main clause sample. Nevertheless, all seven tokens of *there* that did occur (17% of sample, N=42) stood in prefinite position, e.g.:

- (43) þæt þær wæs godcundlic mægen ondweard BH 217
 'that there was a divine power present'
- (44) þæt þær bið soð ærist AE132
 'that there will be a true resurrection'
- (45) þæt þær wæs mycel mennisc toward AE 182
 'that there was a great multitude coming'

This finding, while numerically of rather limited value, is consistent with the main study analysis in which *there* is taken to be an expletive in Spec IP. The occurrence of *there* at a rate comparable to the roughly 20% figure found with main clauses overall is in line with the lack of strong syntactic motivation for its appearance. As an optional element, there was nothing to prevent *there* from filling Spec IP in *that*-clause contexts, and on occasion it did so. The other option, a null expletive, was not uncommon. About 25% of the total number of *that* clauses with existential *be* are subject-finite inversion constructions - VS & XVS – without *there*, which can be analysed in terms of a null expletive, e.g.:

- (46) ... þæt wæron sume gedwolmen ðe cwædon... AE 110
 ‘that there were some heretics who said...’
- (47) ... þ nis na need to spoken AR f31b 12
 ‘that there is no need to speak’

This is consistent with the assumption that *there* functioned principally to keep the verb in second place in V2 contexts: affirmative main clauses without a topicalised XP. Since *that*-clauses are not verb-second contexts, there is no functional pressure on *there* to appear in them.

The bulk of *that* clause subjects in Table 4 were prefinite, and on the standard assumption that they stood in Spec IP the complete absence of *there* in these contexts is straightforwardly accounted for.

5. 14th century developments

By the 14th century we find interesting changes. The later 14th century Pepys manuscript version of AR shows the following distribution of *there* in 34 contexts where it and the Nero manuscript version of AR used in our main study above coincide:

Table 5 Uses of ‘*there*’ in AR, Pepys ms. (14th century)

	X	Y	Z	total
<u>Aff</u>				
+ <i>there</i>	4	8	1	13
- <i>there</i>	0	2	6	8
<u>Neg</u>				
+ <i>there</i>	6	0	0	6
- <i>there</i>	3	1	3	7
	13	11	10	34

Overall, we find *there* in 19/34 (56%) of contexts, a large increase in the rate of *there* use. But this has not yet affected all contexts. The Z contexts still largely lack *there*, and *there* use is not yet categorical in the negative X contexts. However, the Y contexts now mainly have *there*, e.g.:

- (48) Many dyvers reules there ben AR(p) 1,8
 ‘There are many different rules’
- (49) þat two maner temptaciouns þere ben AR(p) 78,14
 ‘that there are two sorts of temptations’

All such cases show quantified NPs preceding *there*. The Z contexts have a topicalised element, often a PP or adverb such as *nu*. But *there* has not yet become the norm in this slot.

The 14th century manuscript version of AR thus shows an interesting transitional phenomenon in the development of expletive *there* whereby *there* appeared very productively in the Y contexts, but not yet in the Z contexts, thus illustrating an orderly process of language change in which a form spreads context-by-context, rather than spreading across the board. It fills in the stage between EME, in which *there* was productive only in the (affirmative) X contexts, and modern English, in which *there* is productive in all three contexts.

Issues for ongoing research are the appropriate analysis of examples like (48)-(49) above, where we find quantified NPs preceding *there*, as compared with the affirmative Z contexts of EME in which *there* was normally absent. Perhaps in both cases (though see Williams 2000) we should adopt an analysis in which *there* or a null expletive stands in the Spec IP subject position, and the logical subject is adjoined to IP by quantifier raising of the QNP:

(50) [_{IP} [_{QP} Many divers rules_i] [_{IP} ther ben t_i]]

The first position character of EME expletive *there* meant that it normally had no grammatical reason to stand in Spec IP until the 14th century.

If we say that by the mid 14th century *there* had become obligatory in all existential contexts, the problem now becomes why in the Z contexts the null expletive remained, in the Pepys version. We note that, when the topicalised XP is locative, this is exactly the context identified above, where PDE allows *there* to be optional:

(51) On the table (there) was a large book

Thus we would not in any case expect *there* use in the Z contexts to have become categorical.

6. Conclusion

This investigation of samples of prose data from the 10th to the 14th century has indicated that in later OE as well as in ME existential *there* was a grammatical element whose structural position was Spec IP. We argue that its structural position remained constant, despite its changing

function over that period, At first *there* served as a device to prevent a verb in INFL from standing in clause-initial position in affirmative main clauses. Later in Middle English, it served to fill Spec IP regardless of whether the verb stood in INFL or not. As in PDE, *there* now discharged the EPP feature of a finite clause, in terms of feature-driven accounts of structural representation (Chomsky 1995). Thus during the course of Middle English it changed from being a first-position expletive element to being a bearer of an EPP feature. Its change of function is presumably to be linked to the loss of the null impersonal subject found in OE and EME (see Haeberli 2000 for a recent discussion of this phenomenon). Once Spec IP had to be overtly filled in a finite clause, expletive *there* was recruited for that purpose when the position lacked a theta-role. The fact that *there* already occupied Spec IP in its function as a first position clitic surely facilitated the change, especially as *there's* earlier function was now becoming obsolete with the decline of V2. In short, *there* was already an expletive standing in Spec IP – a ‘Subject NP’ in terms of Breivik (1991) – in late OE and early ME, rather than taking on this syntactic role later in ME. Its function changed but its structural position remained the same.

Finally we return to the issue of the timing of the emergence of the EN construction. If the foregoing analysis is on the right track, no stipulation needs to be made to the effect that *there* happened to become grammaticised just at the right time to participate in the EN construction. *There* was already an optional expletive element positioned in Spec IP when negated verbs ceased to raise to C after the early 13th century.

Key to sources

- '12C Hom': Twelfth century Homilies in Ms Bodley 343. Edited by A. Belfour. London: Kegan Paul Trench & Trubner 1909. EETS OS 137.
- 'AE': Aelfric's sermons. Edited for the Aelfric Society by B. Thorpe. London, 1846. Vols I and II.
- 'AR': The Ancren Riwe. Edited and translated by J. Morton. London: Camden Soc. 1853.
- 'AR(p)': The Ancrene Riwe. Edited by A. Zetterstein from the Pepys ms. EETS OS 274
- 'BH': The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth century. Edited by R. Morris, 1880. London: Trubner. EETS OS 73.
- 'Kat': The early English life of Seint Katerine and its Latin original, edited by D. Eienkel. London Trubner 1884.
- 'Lam Hom': Old English Homilies and homiletic treatises of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, edited from the Lambeth ms by R. Morris, 1868. EETS OS 34.
- 'Trin Hom': Old English Homilies of the twelfth century, edited from the Trinity ms. by R. Morris. London: Trubner 1873. EETS OS 53.

'V&V': Vices and Virtues, edited by F. Hothausen. EETS OS 89.

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