

# Some Remarks on *There*- and Locative Inversion Constructions

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The topic of this paper is syntactic and functional characteristics of the two constructions with the inverted word order, i.e. *There*-construction (henceforth, TC) and Locative Inversion construction (henceforth LIC). In the literature of the Generative Grammar a lot of works have been done to analyze the TC and the LIC, respectively. And there are a few works to analyze them with the comparison each other. In this article I will argue that these two constructions have the same underlying structure except one point and the two apparent different constructions are derived with different processes of derivation. First I will sketch the characteristics of the TC with the unaccusative verb in the section 1. Next in the section 2 the characteristics of the TC with the unergative verb will be sketched. Then in the section 3 I will contrast the two constructions and argue about the derivational processes. And the concluding remarks follow in the section 4.

## 1. The characteristics of the TC with the unaccusative verb

### 1. 1 With the meaning of 'existence' or 'appearance'

Some propose that there is a constraint on the type of verb in the TC. It is the accusative constraint on the TC. (See Burzio (1986), Belletti (1988), Lumsden (1988), Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995))

- (1) Only the unaccusative verb with the meaning of 'existence' or 'appearance' may occur in the TC.

The followings are some examples of the TC with the unaccusative verb.

The TC has three types of construction. They are

- (i) There + V + NP + PP (inside verbal TC)
- (ii) There + V + PP + NP (outside verbal TC)
- (iii) PP + there + V + NP (variant of (i))

The examples of the construction type (i) are the following.

- (2) a. There hangs a picture of John F. Kennedy on this wall.
- (3) a. There stands an old file cabinet in the corner of the room.
- (4) a. There once lived a man who thought he could fly on the other side of the Old Continent.

The corresponding sentences with the type (ii) are as follows.

- (2) b. There hangs on this wall a picture of John F. Kennedy.
- (3) b. There stands in the corner of the room an old file cabinet.
- (4) b. There once lived on the other side of the Old Continent a man who thought he could fly.

Note that the difference of the string order, (i) NP + PP and (ii) PP + NP does not make difference of the grammaticality when the unaccusative verb has a meaning of 'existence' or 'appearance'.

Of course sentences with the construction type (iii) are predicted to be

grammatical. This is because there is a verb that denotes ‘existence’ or ‘appearance’, and also a location PP that is placed at the front of the sentence, which functions as scene setting.

- (2) c. On this wall there hangs a picture of John F. Kennedy.
- (3) c. In the corner of the room there stands an old file cabinet.
- (4) c. On the other side of the Old Continent there once lived a man who thought he could fly.

In these examples only the kind of the unaccusative verb that has the meaning ‘existence’ or ‘appearance’, occurs. Some argue that only this kind of unaccusative verb can occur in the TC. But there are lots of cases in which other types of verb occur are judged to be grammatical.

Note that the *be* verb is not an unaccusative verb, but this has a meaning of ‘existence’. So we may suppose that the *be* verb can occur in the TC.<sup>1)</sup> And this is born out as in the following.

- (5) a. There are three cars in the garage.

So their argument will turn out to be modified with consideration of functional factors.

## 1. 2 Without the meaning of ‘existence’ or ‘appearance’

Kuno and Takami (1999) argue that all the following sentences are ungrammatical. This is because that the unaccusative verb does not have a meaning of ‘existence’ or ‘appearance’ in these examples. These belong to the type (i).

- (6) a. \*There smoldered a flag in a corner of the room.
- (7) a. \*There burned a flag in a corner of the room.

Note that the corresponding sentences are grammatical when an expression that denotes a place, is placed at the front of the sentence. This belongs to the construction type (iii).

- (8) a. Deep within him there smoldered an unquenchable desire.
- (9) a. In a corner of the room there smoldered a flag that some angry patriot had torn down and ignited.
- (10) a. Deep within him there burned an undying passion.
- (11) a. In the middle of the sea battle, there arose a storm that neither side had anticipated.

This is because a location PP fronted at the beginning of the sentence functions as scene setting. From this I argue that in the TC a location PP must precede a real subject NP.<sup>2)</sup>

In this section we have observed that the unaccusative verb can occur in the TC when they have a meaning of 'existence' or 'appearance'. And even if the unaccusative verb does not have a meaning of 'existence' or 'appearance', the unaccusative verb can occur in the TC with the help of the construction type (iii) as in (8-11). This is because a location PP precedes a real subject NP and the PP functions as scene setting.

Some argue that the unergative verb cannot occur in the TC as we have observed in this section. So in the next section we will examine the case in detail.

## **2. The characteristics of the TC with the unergative verb**

In this section we will observe the cases in which the unergative verb can occur in the TC.

### **2. 1 With the meaning of 'appearance'**

The examples of the construction type (i) are the following.

- (12) a. Late at night, there crept a silent band of soldiers into the mountain village.
- (13) a. In the afternoon, there proceeded a solemn cortege down the road

to the cemetery.

(14) a. Suddenly, there sprang a snarling tiger from the bushes near the path.

(15) a. There ambled two rabbits along the path.

In these examples the verb which denotes ‘appearance’ occurs.<sup>3)</sup>

## 2. 2 Without the meaning of ‘appearance’

The following sentences do not have an expression which denotes ‘existence’ or ‘appearance’. So they are all ungrammatical.

(16) a. \*There danced a young girl in the ballroom.

(17) a. \*There sang a tall middle-aged woman on the stage.

(18) a. \*There played three children in the playground.

(19) a. ??/\*There swam a man in a wetsuit carrying a harpoon towards the party of tourists.

(20) a. \*There walked two people I had thought were dead into the courtroom.

(21) a. \*Suddenly there ran a grizzly bear out of the bushes.

But observe that the corresponding sentences are grammatical when an expression that denotes a place is placed at the front of the sentence. This belongs to the construction type (iii).

(16) b. In the ball room there danced a young girl.

(17) b. On the stage there sang a tall middle-aged woman.

(18) b. In the playground there played three children.

(19) b. Towards the party of tourists (there) swam a man in a wetsuit carrying a harpoon.<sup>4)</sup>

(20) b. Into the courtroom there walked two people I had thought were dead.

(21) b. Out of the bushes there ran out of a grizzly bear.

In these examples the location PP is placed at the front of the sentence and functions as scene setting. So the sentences (16a-21a) in the type (i) turn to be grammatical (16b-21b) in the type (iii).

The examples of the construction type (ii) are the following.

- (16) c. Then there danced towards us a couple dressed like Napoleon and Josephine.
- (17) c. There sang on the stage a tall middle-age woman.
- (18) c. There played in the playground three children.
- (19) c. There swam towards the party of tourists a man in a wetsuit carrying a harpoon.
- (20) c. There walked into the courtroom two people I had thought were dead.
- (21) c. Suddenly there ran out of the bushes a grizzly bear.

All examples here have the sequence, the location PP precedes the real subject NP.

In this section we have observed that the unergative verb can occur in the TC when they have a meaning of 'appearance'. And even if the unergative verb does not have a meaning of 'appearance', the unergative verb can occur in the TC with the help of the construction type (ii) as in (17c-21c) and (iii) as in (17b-21b). This is because a location phrase fronted before the subject NP in the type (ii) and at the beginning of the sentence in the type (iii) functions as scene setting.

From the section 1 and section 2 I propose the following functional constraint.

- (22) The TC is grammatical when it has a verb that denotes 'existence' or 'appearance' and/or the location expression precedes the real subject NP at the last stage of derivation.

And this is on the same track or the functional constraint which is proposed

by Kuno and Takami (1999).<sup>5)</sup>

### 3. The TC and The LIC

According to the above conclusion, the construction type (ii) and (iii) are better than the construction type (i) to function as scene setting. Note that there is another construction type to perform the same function. That is (iv) PP + V + NP. This type of construction is called Locative Inversion Construction. First in this section we will observe examples of the LIC that we assume corresponds to the TC. Then we will discuss functions that the TC and the LIC perform.

#### 3. 1 Characteristics on Distribution

Observe the following sentences with the LIC.

- The LIC with the unaccusative verb which means ‘existence’ or ‘appearance’

The examples of this characteristic are the following.

- (2) d. On this wall hangs a picture of John F. Kennedy.
- (3) d. In the corner of the room stands an old file cabinet.
- (4) d. On the other side of the Old Continent once lived a man who thought he could fly.

- The LIC with the unaccusative verb which does not mean ‘existence’ or ‘appearance’

The examples of this characteristic are the following.

- (5) b. In this garage are three cars.
- (6) c. In a corner of the room smoldered a flag.
- (7) c. In a corner of the room burned a flag.
- (8) b. Deep within him smoldered an unquenched desire.

- (9) b. In a corner of the room smoldered a flag that some angry patriot had torn down and ignited.
- (10) b. Deep within him burned an undying passion.
- (11) b. In the middle of the sea battle arose a storm that neither side had anticipated.

• The LIC with the unergative verb which means ‘appearance’

The examples of this characteristic are the following.

- (12) b. Late at night, into the mountain village crept a silent band of soldiers.
- (13) b. In the afternoon, down the road to the cemetery proceeded a solemn cortege.
- (14) b. Suddenly, from the bushes near the path sprang a snarling tiger.
- (15) b. Along the path ambled two rabbits.

• The LIC with the unergative verb which does not mean ‘appearance’

The examples of this characteristic are the following.

- (16) d. In the ballroom danced a young girl.
- (17) d. On the stage sang a tall middle-age woman.
- (18) d. In the playground played three children.
- (19) d. Towards the party of tourists swam a man in a wetsuit carrying a harpoon.
- (20) d. Into the courtroom walked two people I had thought were dead.
- (21) d. Suddenly out of the bushes ran a grizzly bear.

Note that all the above examples with the LIC are grammatical.

### 3. 2 Functions of the type (ii), (iii) and (iv)

In this subsection I will examine the three types of construction, (ii), (iii) and (iv). First observe the similarity among them. They all have the sequence of strings ‘PP - NP’. And according to the functional constraint



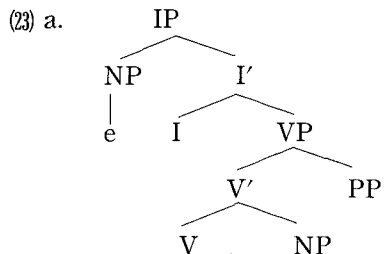
(22), this sequence meets the requirement in (22) and the sentence with this sequence is predicted to be grammatical and this is the case. And the difference among them is that the type (ii) and the type (iii) have *there* in the sentence, but the type (iv) does not. We suppose the construction types (iii) and (iv) are better than the (ii). This is because in the former types the PP with the meaning of location appears in the front position of the sentence, but in the latter type the PP appears in the middle of the sentence. We assume that the former position the PP with the meaning of location is placed at, the stronger the function of scene setting. On the relation between the type (iii) and (iv), they have the same sequence order in common but they differ in the appearance of *there*. We suppose that functions that they perform differ fundamentally. So I will leave an analysis to further studies.

### **3. 3 Derivational process with an unaccusative verb**

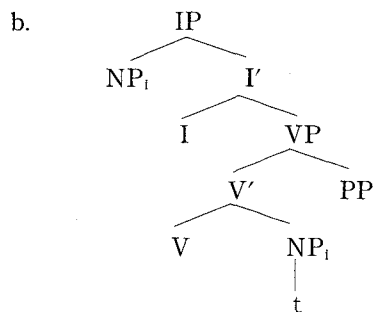
First I will review the two derivational processes of the construction type (ii) and (i) which are proposed by Lumsden (1988) and Kuno & Takami (1999), respectively.<sup>7)</sup> Next I will propose a derivational process for the type (ii) and (i) and argue about the advantage of my proposal. Then I will propose the derivational process for the type (iii) and (iv).

3. 3. 1 Lumsden (1988)

First the sentence with an unaccusative verb has the structure (23)

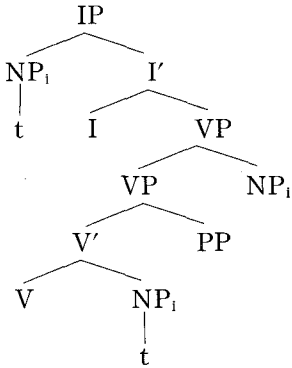


To this structure a movement of real subject NP to the subject position applies.



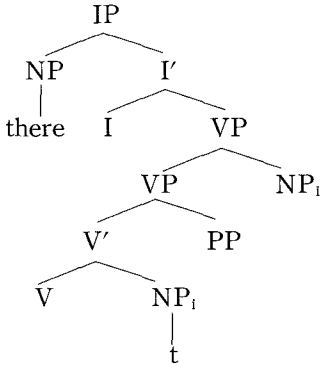
To this structure applied an extraposition of the subject NP and adjunction to the VP.

c.

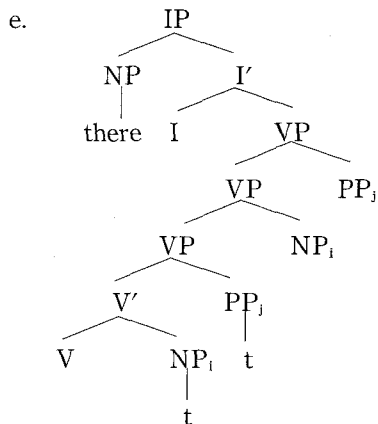


Then a *there* is inserted to the empty subject NP position.

d.



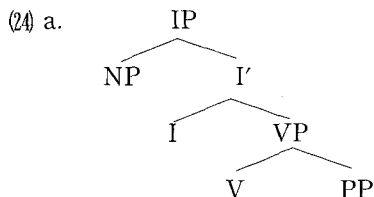
Note that after the three steps of derivation we get the outside verbal TC. When amount of information that a PP bears is heavier than a following NP, that PP is moved over the extraposed subject NP.



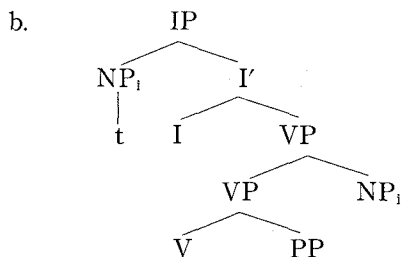
Note that we have four steps to get the inside verbal TC.

### 3. 3. 2 Kuno and Takami (1999)

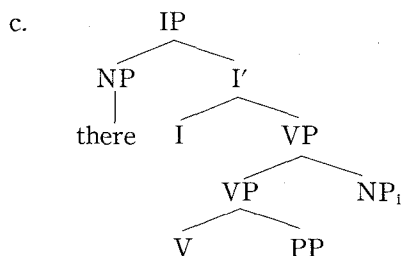
Next I review the derivational process proposed by Kuno and Takami (1999). First they assume the following underlying structure for a sentence with an unaccusative.



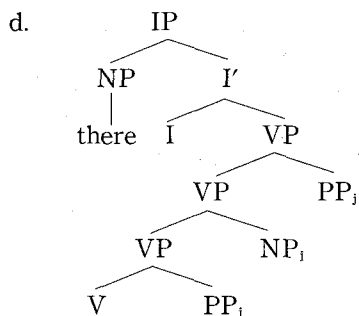
To this structure applied an extraposition of the subject NP.



Then a *there* is inserted in the subject NP position.



When amount of information that a PP bears is heavier than the following NP, that PP is moved over the extraposed subject NP.

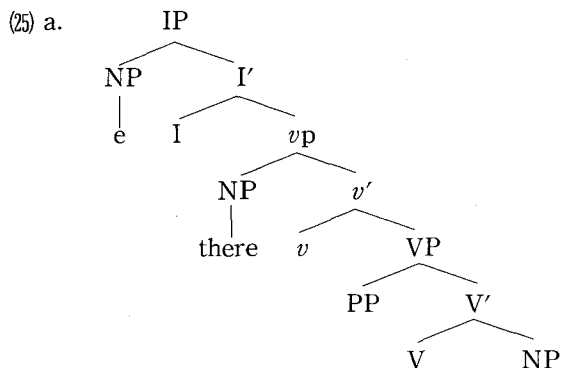


Here it is important to compare the number of derivational steps Lumsden (1988) and Kuno & Takami (1999) need. For both the outside and inside

verbal TC the latter analysis needs fewer steps for the derivation and preferred to the former. For the rest of this subsection I will present an alternative derivational process and argue that this analysis has more advantage than the other two analyses.

### 3. 3. 3 Proposal for the type (ii) and (i)

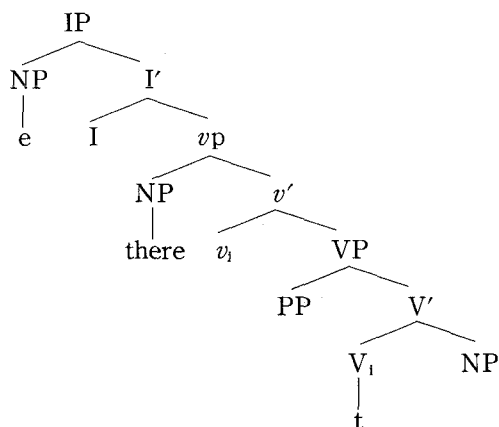
First I suppose the following underlying structure



I take the VP-Shell Hypothesis proposed by Larson (1988). The advantage of taking this position is that the unaccusativity of the verb, taking theme or patient NP as its object in the underlying structure, is realized. Then the NP is moved to the subject position in the derivation. Here in (25) the NP, sister of V, is assigned the theta-role of theme or patient argument of V. And the PP is assigned the theta-role of location argument of V'. This is the same mechanism of the theta-role assignment in the double object construction.

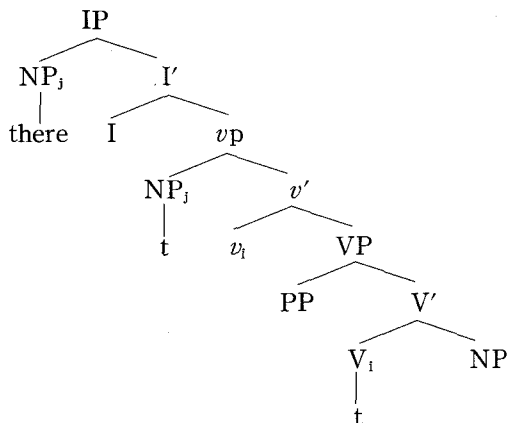
First the V is moved to the *v* position and the following structure derives.

b.

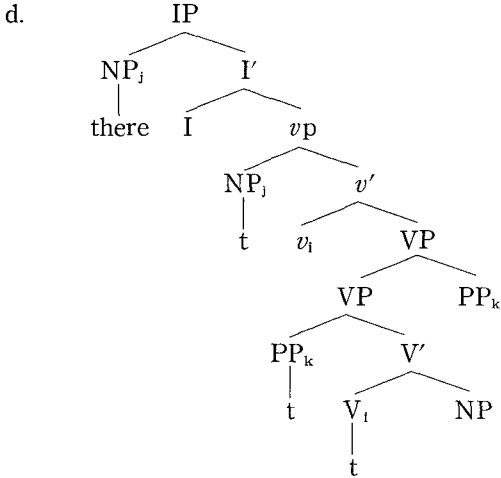


Then the *there* in the specifier position of *vp* is moved to the specifier position of the IP.

c.



At this stage we get an outside verbal TC with two steps of derivation. And when amount of information that the PP bears is heavier than the following NP, that PP is moved over the real subject NP.



We have an inside verbal TC at this stage.

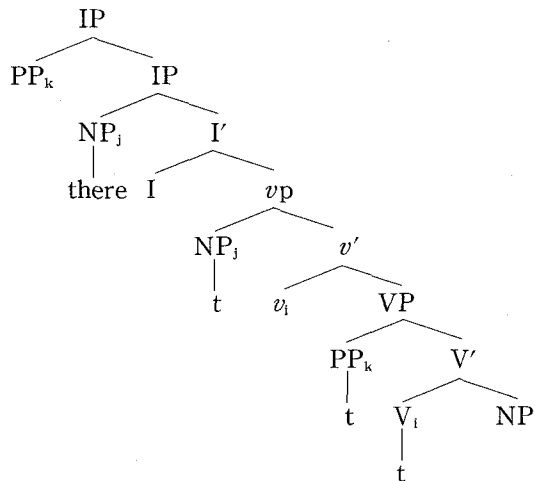
Note that the derivational analysis with the VP-Shell construction presented here needs fewer steps to derive the outside and inside verbal TC, respectively. Here I conclude that this analysis is superior to the other ones presented above for the following reasons. One is that this analysis correctly captures the thematic relation, which the other two analyses cannot. The other is that this analysis needs fewer steps than the analysis by Lumsden (1988).



### 3. 3. 4 The Derivation of the Type (iii)

I will assume that the construction type (iii) is derived from the structure (25 c) by adjoining the location PP to the topmost IP.

(25) e.

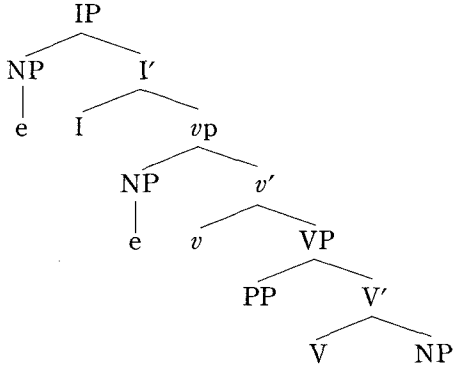


I assume the location PP is moved to the front of the sentence to add the force of function as scene setting to *there*.

### 3. 3. 5 The derivation of the LIC

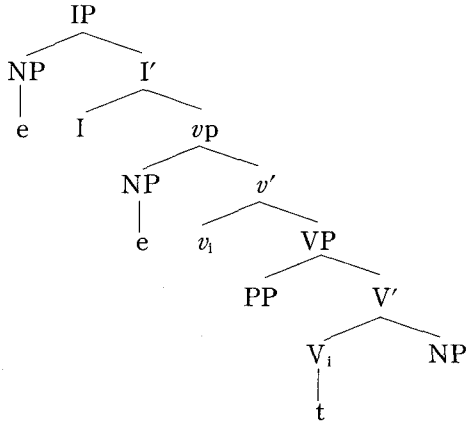
Here I propose derivational steps for the LIC. I suppose the following underlying structure, which is the same as the one proposed by the construction type (iii) except one point.

(26) a.



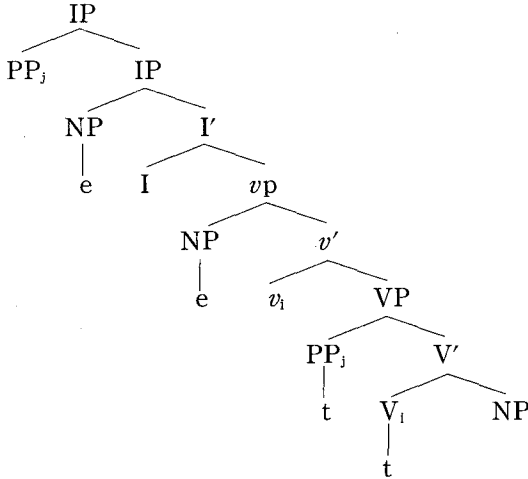
First the V is moved to the *v* position and the following structure derives.

b.



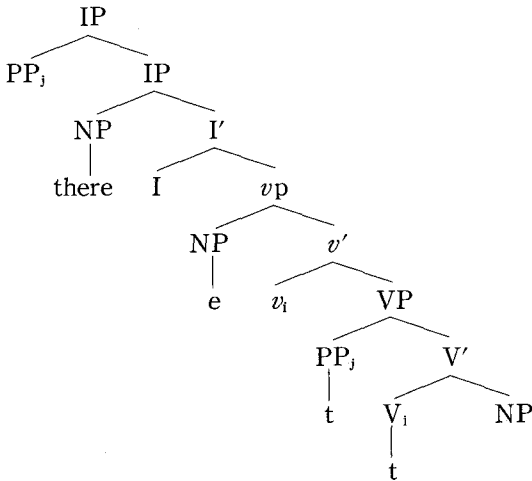
The location phrase, PP, is adjoined to the topmost IP.

c.



To this structure a *there* is inserted to the subject position to meet the Extended Projection Principle.<sup>8)</sup>

d.



By assuming the derived structure as in (26d) I can give a natural account to the distribution of *there* in the tag.

It is well known that the existential sentence with *there* has the following pattern of the tag question.

- (27) There entered the room an old man, didn't there?
- (28) There walked into the room an old man, didn't there?
- (29) There arose a great civilization, didn't there?
- (30) There appeared a tall, dark stranger, didn't there?

Note that the tag question of the LIC has a tag with *there*, too. On the surface the LIC does not have *there* anywhere. So we need some mechanism to explain this behavior.

- (31) In the ocean are whales, aren't there?
- (32) In the garden is a beautiful statue, isn't there?

In these sentences there is no *there* in the surface string. The use of *there* in the tag can be explained if we assume that the sentences (31) and (32) have a *there* in an intermediate stage in which tag are created as we have observed. And at the later stage that *there* will be deleted and the LIC will be derived.

We assume that the type (iii) and (iv) are derived from the same underlying structure but the existence of *there*. Moreover the type (iv) is derived after the deletion of *there*.

## Conclusion

In this article I have presented a derivational process of the *there* construction and Locative Inversion construction. Also I have presented evidence that the analysis assumed here is superior to the other analyses. One piece of evidence is that this derivational process captures the thematic

relations correctly. Another piece of evidence is that this can explain the existence of *there* in the tag question of the Locative Inversion construction.

\* I am deeply grateful to Françoise Carter for the grammatical judgment.

## Notes

1) In the following sentence the verb has a meaning of 'disappearance'. From the argument here this will be predicted to be ungrammatical. But this is not so bad. I suppose the expression 'ship by ship' performs the same function.

(a) ?There went down ship by ship in this vortex.

(b) In this vortex there disappeared/went down ship by ship.

2) With this kind of verb the sentence with the construction type (ii) will be as follows.

(6) b. ?/ \*There smoldered in a corner of the room a flag.

(7) b. ?/ \*There burned in a corner of the room a flag.

These sentences are judged to be ungrammatical or questionable at the best. Although the location PP precedes the real subject NP the location PP is heavier than the real subject NP. So for the functional reason I suppose this is to be judged to be so.

3) The unergative verb does not have a meaning of 'existence' in its own.

4) My informant comments that (20 b) is ungrammatical when there is a *there*.

5) *Functional Constraint on There Construction*

*There Construction* is acceptable if and only if the meaning of 'existence' or 'appearance' is expressed by the preceding verb itself or the location phrase when a real subject is introduced.

6) Although the sentence with the TC is grammatical, the corresponding sentence with the LIC is judged to be ungrammatical. And this needs further study.

(i) a. There is the village idiot at the front door.

b. \*At the front door is the village idiot.

7) In this article I only analyze the construction with unaccusative verb.

8) See Chomsky (1982), p. 10.

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