Expletives, Datives, and the Tension between Morphology and Syntax

RICHARD S. KAYNE
New York University
richard.kayne@nyu.edu

1. Introduction

Pronominal clitics of the sort found in Romance languages are in many ways obviously part of the syntax of those languages. Yet certain aspects of their behavior can lead to proposals more morphological than syntactic in character, as seen in Perlmutter's (1971) templatic approach to the question of clitic ordering and clitic combinations. In this paper, I examine a somewhat different aspect of Romance clitics, one for which a more morphological, less syntactic approach might again come to mind. I will argue, however, in favor of an analysis that, using familiar syntactic notions, ties the phenomenon in question more tightly and more fruitfully, I think, to other aspects of Romance (and universal) syntax.[1]

In the course of so doing, I will be led to reanalyze the status of expletives such as English *there* and its Romance counterparts, proposing in effect that they are not true expletives. Rather, they originate within their so-called 'associate', in way that has something in common with Moro (1997) and, more so, with Sabel (2000), though the proposal I will make ties expletive *there* more closely to various other instances of *there* than do these earlier works.

2. North Italian *ghe*

A clitic that will have an important role in what follows is the *ghe* found in many North Italian dialects, in particular in the Veneto area (Padua, Venice, etc.). The behavior of this *ghe* is different in certain respects from that of comparable clitics in French and Italian. French has a locative clitic *y* seen in:

[1] The present paper corresponds in varying degrees to the first part of one presented at the Stony Brook Workshop on Romance Clitics (May 2005), at the Cambridge University Graduate Linguistics conference (March 2006) and GLOW, Barcelona (April 2006) and in talks at the University of Padua and University of Siena (March 2006).
The proposal on expletive *there* goes back to talks at NYU (September, 2000) and especially at Sophia University, Tokyo (November 2002), as well as to a series of lectures at Leiden University (May/June 2003).
Since Perlmutter (1971), many authors have taken a more syntactic (and more fruitful) approach to clitic ordering and clitic combinations; for particularly striking results concerning Romanian, see Săvescu Ciucivara (2006).

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

(1) Jean y a mis le livre
'J there has put the book'

This *y* is a clitic in the familiar sense. It can't be coordinated, or modified, or contrastively stressed. It occurs to the left of the finite verb or auxiliary, in contrast to non-clitic locatives, which follow the verb. In French, this *y* is distinct from the third-person dative clitic, which is *lui* in the singular and *leur* in the plural, e.g.:

(2) Jean lui a donné le livre
'J him/her(dat.) has given the book'

A parallel contrast between locative clitic and third person dative clitic holds for Italian:

(3) Gianni ci ha messo il libro
'G there has put the book'

(4) Gianni gli ha dato il libro
'G him/them(dat.) has given the book'

with *ci* the locative clitic and *gli* the dative (*le* for feminine gender, in the singular).

Many Veneto dialects, on the other hand, have a clitic *ghe* that seems to cover both locative and third person dative, e.g. in Paduan:

(5) Ghe meto el libro
'there I-put the book'

(6) Ghe dago el libro
'there I-give the book' = 'I'm giving him/her/them the book'

The use of *ghe* in (6) is systematic for Paduan - there is no distinct dative clitic form for third person, singular or plural.[2]

The question is how to think of this kind of syncretism. A highly morphological approach might be tempted to say that it's merely a case of two pronominal clitics that happen to be spelled out in the same way. Yet Paduan third person pronouns typically have, like those of French and Italian, an *-l-* (sometimes pronounced as a *y*-glide, sometimes not pronounced), and never otherwise have a *g(h)-* (the *h* in *ghe* is just orthographic).

The more syntactic approach that I will now develop will try, instead, to find a principled reason for the appearance of an apparently locative clitic in dative sentences like (6).

3. *There* and *ghe* as deictics

As a first step, it is necessary, I think, to move away from the terminology 'locative clitic', which is misleading in an important respect. This is true for all three

[2] This is so, whether or not the sentence contains an accusative clitic - differently from the Spanish so-called 'spurious *se*' that Perlmutter (1971) discusses.

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

languages mentioned so far. Both French and Italian, which clearly distinguish their locative clitic from their dative clitics, have their locative clitic appearing, as is well-known, in sentences that are not locative at all:

(7) Jean y pense
'J of-it thinks'

(8) Gianni ci pensa
(Italian - same)

In these sentences with the verb 'think', in the sense of 'think of/about something', both French and Italian readily have, when the complement is an unstressed pronominal (especially inanimate), what looks like the locative clitic.
In earlier work - Kayne (2004a) - I argued that sentences like (7) and (8) correspond closely to archaic English sentences of the following sort:

(9) We spoke thereof

which also contain what seems to be a locative *there* in sentences that do not involve location. Such archaic English sentences (whose counterparts are very much alive in Dutch and German) differ from (7) and (8) in having an overt preposition (in this example, *of*) in addition to *there*.
My proposal was to take French and Italian sentences like (7) and (8) to contain a silent counterpart of that preposition, whichever one is appropriate for the verb in question. (Thus (7) will have a silent *à* and (8) a silent *a* - essentially the same one in the two languages.)

From this perspective, there is a unified phenomenon in (7)-(9) whereby an element that looks like a locative (*y* or *ci* or *there*) appears in a non-locative sentence. The account I proposed goes essentially as follows (using mostly English examples, but the analysis is the same for French and Italian, apart from the orthogonal non-clitic vs. clitic difference).

There is not, strictly speaking, locative in any of its uses. Both in (9) and in banal locative sentences like:

(10) We went there yesterday

we have an element *there* that is the same element as the one found in non-standard English in:[3]

[3] And similarly for *here* in:
(i) This here car ain't no good
Although non-standard in English, comparable combinations of *there/here* with a demonstrative are standard in French:
(ii) cette voiture-là
'dem. car there'
(iii) cette voiture-ci
'dem. car here'
(In French, the demonstrative itself does not vary in form, in contrast to English *this* vs. *that*.)
On the fact that *-là* and *-ci* follow the noun in French, see Bernstein (1997). Sentences like (11) and (i) but with a definite article in place of the demonstrative are also standard in various Scandinavian languages - cf. Leu (2007).
In French, there is also a form *ici* ('here') in ordinary locative sentences like:

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

(11) That there car ain't no good.

In addition, the proposal is that in both (10) and (11) *there* modifies a noun, except that in (10) the noun is silent (to be indicated by capital letters), i.e. (10) is to be thought of as:

(12) ...there PLACE...

The same holds of (9), except that the silent noun in (9) is not PLACE, but THING:[4]

(13) ...there THING of...

Exactly parallel, except for the silent preposition (indicated as P) are (7) and (8):

(14) ...y/ci THING P...

The question now is how to understand the elements *y, ci* and *there* that occur in this range of environments (see also note 3). In (7)-(9), they are not locative in any simple sense. The link with (11) suggests a link with what we call demonstratives, which in some cases do seem related to location, as in pointing contexts:

(15) Bring us that book, please

Yet, as is well-known, demonstratives are not limited to contexts involving location:

(16) That book you mentioned yesterday is of little interest

A familiar idea concerning demonstratives is that they involve deixis, or reference to or orientation with respect to the speaker. The difference between *this* and *that* in English could, for example, be put as 'in the sphere of the source of the sentence' vs. 'not in the sphere of the source of the sentence'.

Taking the term 'deixis' over to *there* (and *here*), I will henceforth speak of deictic *there* (and deictic *here*), for all the cases mentioned. In each of (9), (10) and (11) we have an instance of exactly the same deictic *there*; the three differ with respect to what deictic *there* modifies (THING in (9), PLACE in (10), and *car* in (11)[5]). For the case of deictic *there* modifiying PLACE, a noun expressing location, I will use the term 'locative *there*', to be understood solely as an abbreviation for 'deictic *there* modifying PLACE'.

From this perspective, all of (9)-(11) contain deictic *there*. But of the three sentences, only (10) is a locative sentence (in the sense that it contains locative *there*, by virtue of containing '*there* PLACE'). (7) and (8) are like (9) - they contain deictic *y* and *ci*,

---

(iv) Jean est ici.
'J is here'
with an extra *i*- whose morphemic status remains to be fully understood.

[4] Possibly THING precedes *there*, and similarly for French and Italian; cf. Kayne (2006).

[5] In colloquial Norwegian, a prenominal (counterpart of) *there* can in some cases itself modify PLACE, with '*there* PLACE' then modifying the lexical noun - see Leu (2007) - whether this is an option in non-standard English is not clear. English certainly allows this post- nominally, as in:
(i) That car (over) there looks dangerous

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

the French and Italian counterparts of deictic *there*, but are not locative sentences, since they have no PLACE. *Y* and *ci* in (7) and (8) are deictic clitics that are not part of a locative phrase. In:

(17) Jean y va
'J there goes'

(18) Gianni ci va
(Italian - same)

y and *ci* are deictic clitics that are part of a locative phrase, since (17) and (18) contain PLACE.

Returning to Paduan, we see that (5) contains a deictic clitic *ghe* that is part of a locative phrase, given that the verb 'put' calls for PLACE (or some overt counterpart). The specificity of Paduan (6), repeated here:

(19) Ghe dago el libro
'there I-give the book' = 'I'm giving him/her/them the book'

is now seen to be that Paduan, unlike standard French and Italian, has a deictic clitic in its third- person dative sentences where one might have expected a dative clitic. The question is why.

A second question is whether (19) contains PLACE, i.e. whether *ghe* there is locative. I will argue that it is not. *Ghe* in (19) will be seen to be deictic, but not locative, just as the clitics *y* and *ci* in (7) and (8) are deictic but not locative.

4. Silent DATCL

As part of the analysis of Paduan sentences like (19), let me propose that (19) actually does contain a third person dative clitic, of the sort seen overtly in French and Italian in (2) and (4). The difference is that, in Paduan and various other dialects, that clitic is silent. In other words, (19) should be thought of as:[6]

(20) DATCL ghe dago el libro.

where DATCL represents the silent dative clitic.

The fact that *ghe* appears to 'replace' only third person dative clitics must now be interpreted more precisely as meaning that the silent DATCL that *ghe* cooccurs with in sentences like (19)/(20) is limited to third person and cannot be first or second person (or reflexive).

This person restriction can be understood in part as follows. The person property of silent DATCL[7] links up here to the fact that various languages (e.g. Somali

[6] Whether DATCL precedes *ghe* (as I've chosen to indicate it here) or follows it is a potentially important question that will, however, not be relevant to what follows in this paper.

The silent clitic postulated here should be compared to those discussed by Benincà (1989) for Friulian, by Roberts (1993) for Valdostano, and by Longa et al. (1998) for various Iberian languages/dialects.

[7] The presence of DATCL appears to be licensed by deictic *ghe*, though how exactly remains to be worked out - perhaps the presence of *ghe* makes available a phasal spec position into which the dative clitic can 'disappear', a la Kayne (2006).

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

- cf. Saeed (1993, 174)) have zero forms for (object) third person pronouns in general (even in the absence of any apparent licenser), but not for first or second person. Closer to Paduan, French silent subject clitics, as in:

(21) Lui a téléphoné
'him has called'

with a silent third person subject clitic (in addition to non-clitic *lui*), are also limited to third person (non-reflexive):

(22) *Moi ai téléphoné
'Me has called'

as discussed in Kayne & Pollock (2001, sect. 5). Additional instances of a restriction to third person, in the case of silent pronominals, are discussed in Kayne (2001). (Whether, despite appearances, this restriction can be attributed directly to UG, in which case nothing special would need to be said about Paduan in this regard, remains to be seen).

By attributing the person restriction holding of Paduan dative sentences with *ghe* to the presence of DATCL, i.e. by calling DATCL (rather than *ghe*) the true locus of the person restriction, we account straightforwardly for the fact that the Paduan counterpart of (7) and (8), namely:

(23) Giorgio ghe pensa
'G there thinks'

does not show the same person restriction. Paduan (23), like French (7) and Italian (8), allows reference to a first or second person (or reflexive) object (of the silent preposition) to some extent, especially with CLLD (clitic left dislocation) and with coordination. An example with CLLD in Italian (a French example with coordination is given in Kayne (1975, sect. 2.7)[8] with a reflexive is:

(24) A se stessa, Maria non ci pensa (from Cinque (1990, 59)
'to refl. same, M neg. there thinks'

Although sentences like (23) cannot refer to first or second person or reflexive with complete freedom, the restriction appears to be different in kind from the absolute one holding of (19). The reason is that only in (19) is reference mediated by DATCL (rather than by *ghe*, which is expletive-like in (19), as we shall see later), and silent DATCL is absolutely limited to third person.

In (23), on the other hand, DATCL is not present. Instead, we have, as in (14), with P = preposition:

(25) ...ghe THING P...

or, more exactly, in those (limited) cases involving reference to a person (as in (24)):

[8] Cf. also van Riemsdijk (1978, 125) on colloquial Dutch R-pronouns being able to refer to humans, perhaps parallel to *y/en, ci/ne*; cf. also Bennis (1986, 191).

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

(26) ...ghe PERSON P...

Conversely, a phrase of the type 'ghe PERSON' is not present in (19) – this is related to the just-mentioned expletive-like character of the *ghe* of (19).
The presence of DATCL in (19) also plays a role in clitic doubling of the sort seen in:

(27) Ghe dago el libro a Giorgio
'there I-give the book to G'

By having DATCL in such sentences, we can (correctly, I think) assimilate this clitic doubling to the parallel well-known phenomenon found with datives in Spanish (although the dative clitic in Spanish is pronounced more than in Paduan). Of particular interest here is the point made by Cordin (1991) for Trentino (which is similar to Paduan in the relevant respects), namely that despite the appearance of the deictic clitic in both dative and locative sentences, there is a difference between them when it comes to clitic doubling. Clitic doubling is compatible (and generally obligatory when there's a non-clitic dative) with the presence of *ghe* in dative sentences, yet impossible with *ghe* in locative sentences. (Clitic doubling must be kept distinct from right-dislocation, which is possible with both datives and locatives.) The reason, from the present perspective, is that clitic doubling is dependent on DATCL, and that *ghe* by itself is not compatible with clitic doubling (for reasons to be elucidated).[9]
The proposal that there is a silent dative clitic in (27) leads to the expectation that there could be Romance languages in which that dative clitic would be overt at the same time as (the counterpart of) *ghe*, even in sentences with no locative (i.e. with no PLACE). This expectation is met by some Sardinian, to judge by an example given by Jones (1993, 220):

(28) Narrabílis!
'tell *bi* to-them'

where *bi* is the Sardinian deictic clitic parallel to *ghe*, and *lis* is the overt (plural) dative clitic (with the accusative unpronounced, as in some French). [10]

5. Expletive *there* and expletive *ghe* as deictics

From the perspective of the proposal in (20), *ghe* there is definitely not a dative clitic. It should rather be taken to be exactly the same kind of deictic element as all the other instances of *ghe* (and *there* and *y* and *ci*) under discussion. At the same time, it does not seem to be identical to any of them.
The reason, I think, is that the *ghe* in Paduan dative sentences that cooccurs with DATCL is an expletive, in the same sense as the *ghe* of the Paduan sentence:

[9] The *ghe* of (23) seems by and large to be incompatible with (non-dislocated) clitic doubling, too, as expected (since there's no DATCL there), though there is the kind of exception mentioned in Kayne (1975, chap. 2, note 51).
[10] If the order of clitics in (28) were to turn out to be limited to imperatives, one would think of Terzi (1999).

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

(29) Ghe ze un libro...
'*ghe* is a book...'

which is strongly similar to the Italian:

(30) C'è un libro sul tavolo
'there is a book on-the table'

Burzio (1986, 148) has already argued that in this kind of Italian existential sentence *ci/c'* is significantly similar to English expletive *there* in:

(31) There's a book on the table

By extension, the *ghe* of (29) is essentially the same as English expletive *there*.

An important difference, of course, is that English *there* is subject-like as far as its final position is concerned, while Italian *ci* shares properties of object clitics and not of subjects (e.g. *ci* follows negation and certain other object clitics). In this regard, Paduan *ghe* is very much like *ci*. But if, in the spirit of Burzio (1986), we set aside the subject position vs. object clitic position difference, we arrive at the conclusion that all of these (*ghe*, *ci*, *there*) in (29)-(31) are expletives in the same sense.

Recall that the first part of the answer to the question why Paduan would have deictic *ghe* in its third person dative sentences was that *ghe* in such sentences is actually present alongside silent DATCL. The second part, now, is that the *ghe* of Paduan datives is an expletive *ghe* of the sort found in (29). This will mean, in a way to be explored shortly, that Paduan dative sentences have exactly the right number of arguments for the number of theta roles.

There are still two further questions. First, what exactly do we mean by 'expletive'? Second, why is Paduan allowed to have an expletive in dative sentences in the first place? Let me begin with the first question.

One of the guiding principles of the discussion so far has been that the various uses of *there* and of *ghe* and of *ci* and *y* are all reflections of exactly the same deictic element occurring in somewhat different environments. In all the cases discussed, the deictic modified a noun (or NP). That noun is overt in *that there car* and in the corresponding French *cette voiture-là* ('that car there') - see note 3. In the other cases mentioned, the noun modified by the deictic is silent, either PLACE or THING or PERSON. Pursuing this guiding principle further, we unavoidably (and desirably, I will argue) arrive at the conclusion that all the expletive uses of *there* and *ghe* and *ci* and *y* (and of Sardinian *bi* and Catalan *hi*) are likewise instances of this same deictic element.

If English expletive *there* is the same deictic element as all the other instances of *there*, then we would expect it, too, (in (31), for example) to modify a noun (or NP). The next question, then, is, what noun? Taking into account examples like:

(32) There's a car in this garage

and the fact that *there* is incompatible with *this*:

(33) There's a car in this here/*there garage

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

there is little plausibility to taking *there* in these examples to modify *garage*. Much more natural, I think, is the proposal that expletive *there* is modifying the other noun, the one informally called the 'associate'. Put another way, in (32) and (33) expletive *there* is a deictic modifier of *car*. More generally:

(34) a. In English existential sentences, expletive *there* is invariably a deictic modifier of the associate.

b. The same holds in existentials for Paduan *ghe*, for Italian *ci*, for French *y*, etc. (Note that given the discussion above, this definitely does not mean that expletive *there* is locative; expletive *there* (and its counterparts in other languages) is a deictic element that is non- locative, i.e. that does not modify PLACE.)

Adopting (34) means adopting derivations in which expletive *there* originates within the associate and splits off from it, ending up in subject position (and similarly for the other languages, apart from the object clitic vs. subject position difference). There are two ways to think of this splitting off. One would be to have *there* raise directly out of the associate containing it. A second would be to have the rest of the associate raise, stranding *there* and then to have '*there* + trace of associate' raise further in the manner of remnant movement.

There may well be some questions with respect to which the choice between these two approaches to 'splitting' is neutral. For others, though, the choice is likely to be meaningful (e.g., for agreement, as discussed below). Thinking more specifically of the kind of remnant movement derivations discussed in Kayne (2002) and works cited there, and of the possible impossibility of extraction of modifiers from within a containing DP, let me adopt the second, remnant movement, approach, which yields (for sentences like (31)) (partial, sketchily illustrated) derivations such as the following:

(35) ...[there a book]... → raising of 'a book'
...a book$_i$ ... [there t$_i$]... → merger of V
...is a book$_i$ ... [there t$_i$]... → remnant movement
...[there t$_i$]$_k$ is a book$_i$ ... t$_k$...

and similarly for Paduan, etc. modulo the difference in final landing site (i.e. *ghe* will end up in an object clitic position, rather than in a subject position).[11]

The proposal reflected in (35) has expletive *there* originating as an instance of deictic (non- locative) *there* contained within an indefinite DP (using the term DP loosely). In (non-standard) English, however, *there* appears with an overt noun only

[11] For the Romance languages under discussion, the most direct transposition from (35) would suggest that the expletive clitic (e.g. *ghe*) is a remnant, rather than a pure head. The possibility that pronominal clitics are always phrasal needs to be examined carefully in any event.

A remnant movement approach to pronominal clitics may be suggested, too, by cases of past participle agreement in Italian with *ne*, which itself shows no phi-features:

(i) Ne ho visti tre
'of-them I-have seen$_{plural}$ three'

and (example suggested by Guglielmo Cinque, p.c.):

(ii) Ne ho letta la metà, di quel libro
'of-it I-have read$_{fem.}$ the half$_{fem.}$, of that book$_{masc.}$'

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

in the presence of a demonstrative:

(36) that there book; this here book

as opposed to:

(37) *the there book; *the here book

(38) *a there book; *some here book, etc.

(39) *there a book; *here some book, etc.

How plausible is it, then, in particular in light of (38) and (39), to allow the derivation in (35)?

One consideration can be put as follows. Given (36), would we have expected (38) or (39) to be acceptable, or not?[12] That depends, I think, on how exactly we see the derivation of (36) itself. In particular, if (36) has *there* or *here* originating within a relative clause structure, then the impossibility of (38)/(39) is actually a bit surprising, given that relative clauses are in general compatible with both definite and indefinite 'heads'.[13]

Kayne (2004a) argued against a relative clause analysis of (36) on what I now think were inconclusive grounds. The relevant data are in part:

(40) *that over there book, *this right here book

which contrast with:

(41) the book that's over there; the book that's right here

Relatives can contain *over there* or *right here*, but those combinations are not possible prenominally. Somewhat similarly, *there* in a relative can be stressed (indicated here by extra spacing and italics) in a way that it cannot be prenominally:

(42) the book that's *t h e r e*

(43) *that *t h e r e* book

(vs. that *g r e e n* book) - suggesting, apparently, that prenominal deictic *there* and *here* must have a source other than within a (reduced) relative. However, there's a narrower conclusion that can be drawn - one that allows these facts to be interpreted as neutral with respect to the relative clause question.

This narrower conclusion is that *over* and *right* in (40) and stress in (43) are excluded because they all depend on the presence of PLACE,[14] i.e. on the presence of

[12] On (37), see Leu (2007).

[13] Indefinite-'headed' relatives are also compatible with 'person'-possessives that have something in common with deictics:
(i) We need a place of our own

[14] For a compatible approach to *right*, see Johnson (1991).
Supporting the importance of PLACE are the following, similar to (40):
(i) We spoke (*over) thereof

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

a locative phrase. Deictic *there* and *here* are by themselves not compatible with *over* or *right* or with contrastive stress falling on them. If this is correct, then prenominal deictic *there* (or *here*) could well have a relative clause source, as long as the relative lacked PLACE.[15]

If prenominal *there* and *here* do have a relative clause source, then it is (38)/(39) that is surprising, and not the presence of '[there a book]' in the derivation proposed in (35).

The question remains, then, as to why neither (38) nor (39) is possible. Let me suggest a link to Szabolcsi's (1983; 1994) analysis of Hungarian possessive sentences. Szabolcsi argues that possessors (in the Hungarian counterparts of simple possessive sentences like *John has a sister*) originate within a DP (containing *a sister*) that is the argument of an existential verb (that looks like *be*). The possessor then moves out of that DP, doing so obligatorily because the DP is indefinite.

Putting it slightly differently, a Hungarian DP containing a (relatively non-embedded) possessor must necessarily 'split' if that DP is indefinite (and may do so if it is definite). Let me now suggest the same for deictic *there*, namely that when deictic *there* is contained in an indefinite DP (and not embedded too far down in it), that indefinite DP must split obligatorily, in the way shown in (35).[16] (Why exactly such (non-specific) indefinites must split in these two kinds of cases, and perhaps others, or perhaps all cases, remains to be elucidated[17]). (38) and (39) are impossible as intact DPs because they have not split, despite being indefinite. Yet such indefinite DPs containing deictic *there* (or *here*) can be legitimate if they do split, and therefore can appear in the initial stage of a derivation such as (35).

In summary, then, what we call expletive *there* is characterized by (34) and, along with its counterparts in various Romance languages, has a derivation of the sort loosely sketched in (35).

(ii) We spoke (*right) thereof

The contrasts seem clear, even relative to archaic English. More part of (a certain) spoken English is:

(iii) I hereby give you permission

Again:

(iv) *I over/right hereby give you permission

[15] Like simple adjectives, deictics, even if derived from relative clauses, cannot, I think, remain postnominal (contrary to certain reduced relatives like *any linguist interested in physics*), i.e. (i) and, very clearly, (ii) in English feel as if they only contain a locative:

(i) that book there

(ii) the book that's there

In French, on the other hand, (iii) almost certainly can be a non-locative deictic:

(iii) ce livre-là

On the order difference between English and French and its relation to the position of adjectives, see Bernstein (1997).

On adjectives being derived from relatives, cf. Kayne (1994, sect. 8.4) and references cited there; also Leu (2006). On nouns themselves being derived from relatives, cf. Koopman (2003; 2005).

[16] Maximal parallelism with Hungarian would lead to thinking that Hungarian indefinites containing a possessor split in remnant movement fashion, too.

[17] One should also consider this from the perspective of Sportiche (2002) on D.

The Hungarian possessor asymmetry between definite and indefinite DPs has a partial counterpart within English, in the contrast between (i) and (ii):

(i) a friend of John's

(arguably derived from 'John's a friend' - cf. Kayne (1993, sect. 1.2) - by movement of *a friend* to the Spec of *of*) vs.:

(ii) John's friend

If the containing DP is definite, as in (ii), the kind of movement seen in (i) need not take place.

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

6. Deictics, demonstratives and indefinites

As illustrated in (36)-(39), English deictics have a privileged relation to demonstratives, which are the only determiners that in (non-standard) English can overtly cooccur with a prenominal deictic. On the other hand, not every instance of a demonstrative is compatible with a deictic, even (to my not entirely native ear) in non-standard English. The following seem appreciably less possible than (36):

(44) *Your child has never been that there irritable before

(45) *A thesis shouldn't really be this here short

(Both of these would be possible without *there* or *here*.) The generalization may be that deictics must modify a noun (or projection thereof).[18]

To the (partial) extent that deictics do have a privileged relation with demonstratives, we are led to ask, given the proposal that deictics can in fact combine with indefinites, whether demonstratives might not be able to combine with indefinites, too, in a way that would support separating both deictics and demonstratives from any intrinsic link to definiteness.

Of interest here is Hebrew, as discussed by Sichel (2001), which has the convenient property that its demonstratives cooccur, when in a definite DP, with an overt definite article:

(46) ha-yalda ha-zot
'the girl the dem.'

Yet Hebrew also allows (Sichel, chap. 1, note 6):

(47) yalda zot

with no definite article, yet with the same demonstrative element. In addition, while (46) as a direct object would be preceded by the morpheme *et* that normally precedes definite direct objects, (47) would not be. Sichel concludes that (47) is an instance of a demonstrative that is not definite.[19]

It seems, then, that demonstratives are no more universally wedded to definites than are, given my proposal that expletive *there* is a deictic originating within an indefinite, deictics. The plausibility of (35) is thereby enhanced.

7. The definiteness effect

The order of elements in the constituent '[there a book]' postulated in (35), in which *there* precedes *a*, is indirectly supported by (non-standard):

(48) these here four books

to the extent that the indefinite article *a* is akin to numerals, as argued by Perlmutter

[18] At least in English. Delsing (1993, 136) notes as acceptable the Swedish counterpart of **a so here big car*.

[19] Cf. perhaps English:
(i) There's this guy on the phone for you.

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

(1970). In other words, '...there a...' in (35) parallels '...here four...' in (48).

Assume now that the definite article would, in contrast, precede the deictic, as the demonstrative does in the example just given.[20] This means that replacing the indefinite article in (35) by a definite article would yield:

(49) ...[the there book]...

(50) ...[the there three books]...

This contrast in relative position between definite and indefinite article will have an interesting effect. Whereas in (35) 'a book' could raise out from within 'there a book', that same raising will be precluded in (49) or (50). Such raising of 'the book' or of 'the three books' out of their containing DP is precluded by the fact that in (49) and (50) 'the book' and 'the three books' are not constituents. Therefore there is no way to have, parallel to (35), a derivation that would yield, with expletive *there*:

(51) *There's the book on the table

Thus we have, granted that *the* must precede *there* or *here*, the beginning of an account of the core definiteness effect found in (English) existentials. [21]
In essence, any determiner that must in general precede deictic *there* will be incompatible
with the kind of derivation shown in (35) that underlies existentials that contain expletive *there* (a particular subcase of deictic *there*).

Starting from (49) or (50) there is another imaginable derivation that needs to be considered, in which '(a) book' or 'three books' would be raised out of the containing DP leaving behind 'the there'. Such a derivation would yield:

(52) *The there is (a) book on the table

(53) *The there are three books on the table

These can be excluded if the presence of *the* blocks the raising operation.[22] That *the* might have such a blocking effect is a long-standing idea - cf. Fiengo and Higginbotham (1981). Although there are exceptions and although the reason for the blocking effect needs to be made more precise, there is one very sharp case in

[20] Contrary to Afrikaans, for which something further needs to be said. On relatives preceding D, cf. Whitman (1981) and Kayne (1994, sect. 8.3).

[21] (51) is possible in a 'list' context, e.g.:
(i) What should we read? Well, there's the book on the table
(ii) Who can we invite? Well, there's John
Perhaps the definites here are embedded within hidden indefinites.

On differing sensitivity to definiteness in two dialects of Catalan, see Rigau (2005, 792); similarly, for two varieties of Spanish, Longa et al. (1998, 13).

As a reviewer emphasizes, the account suggested for (51) should generalize to (cf. Milsark (1974)):
(iii) *There's every book on the/a shelf
on the assumption that this *every* must precede *there* as *the* does in (49), and similarly for other 'strong determiners' in Milsark's sense. The contrast with:
(iv) There's every reason to believe we're right
implies, then, that the *every* of (iv) is lower than that of (iii), as argued on independent grounds by Postma and Rooryck (1996).

[22] For a partly similar idea, see den Dikken (1997).

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

Romance that seems to fit well with (52)/(53):

(54) Jean en a (*les) trois
'J of-them has (the) three'

(55) Jean en a un/*l' autre
'J of-them has an/the other'

In these French examples, the extraction of quantitative *en* (cf. Pollock (1998)) is blocked by the presence of a definite article.[23] Thinking of (48) and the corresponding non-standard:

(56) them there four books

(with *them* rather than *those*), one also needs to exclude a derivation that would yield:

(57) *Them there were four books on the table an hour ago

Again, it is plausible that the presence of *them* blocks the extraction of *four books* that would have been necessary to derive (57) in a way parallel to the licit derivation indicated in (35).

Arguably like the definiteness effect of (51) is (cf. Heim (1987)) the absence of a wide scope reading for *three books* in *There must be three books on the table.* From the present perspective, a wide scope ('specific') reading of *three books* must in general require the presence of a 'specific' D (a more general D than the one restricted to definites), covert in English but arguably overt in Gungbe (Aboh, 2004; chap. 3). That D will have the same effect on extraction of *there* as the definite D.[24] (Not surprisingly, then, Cresti (2003) argues that there is a parallel scope restriction with Italian *ne* (related to the French *en* of (54) and (55)).)

8. Agreement

In the remnant movement derivation given in (35), what ends up in subject position is '[there t_i]', where t_i is the trace/copy of 'a book'. In the corresponding derivation of:

(58) There are three books on the table

[23] Cf. Kayne (1975, chap. 2, note 55). Note that right-dislocation with *de* (cf. Vinet (1977)), but without *en*, is possible:
(i) Jean m'a montré les tiens, de livres
'J me has shown the yours, of books'
though not with *des*:
(ii) *Jean m'a montré les tiens, des livres
'...of-the books'
The text discussion assumes that there is no 'escape-hatch' available in these cases, either, in particular Spec,DP (unlike in the case of (Hungarian) possessors).

[24] The ill-formedness of (i) can similarly be taken to reflect the presence of a covert definite or specific D (required by the presence of *all*):
(i) *There will all be three books on the table
The ill-formedness of (ii) (v. Chomsky (1995, 275)) might be related to this:
(ii) *There seem to each other to be five people here

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

what ends up in subject position is again '[there t_i]', where t_i is now the trace/copy of 'three books'. This may make it possible to take the plural *are* in (58) to be determined by the plurality of the phrase in subject position, which is not simply expletive (deictic) *there*, but a bigger phrase containing (the trace/copy of) plural number (cf. also Koopman, 2003; 2005). If this is correct, then there may be no need here for downward agreement of the sort proposed by Chomsky (2001).[25]

In a similar vein, in the Italian counterpart of (58):

(59) Ci sono tre libri sul tavolo
'there are three books on-the table'

the plural form *sono* might be determined through direct agreement with the preceding '[ci t_i]', i.e. with the phrase containing the expletive clitic. Alternatively, there may be a spec position between *ci* and *sono* through which '[ci t_i]' has passed.[26]

9. Why is *there* the expletive?

English expletive *there* has no counterpart in *then*:

(60) There are problems with your proposal

(61) *Then are problems with your proposal

If expletives were uninterpretable elements merged directly into a (relatively) high subject position, it would not be immediately clear why English or some nearby (or distant) language could not have *then* as its expletive. From the present perspective, which takes expletive *there* to be a deictic element merged within an indefinite DP, we can do somewhat better. First, we can note that the contrast between (60) and (61) is not limited to existential contexts; it is also found in the archaic English construction mentioned earlier, e.g.:

(62) We spoke thereof/*thenof

and similarly for *thereby*, which can still be heard:

(63) We thereby/*thenby demonstrated...

More pointedly, perhaps, deictic *there* preceding an overt noun has no *then* counterpart: [27]

[25] The lack of agreement possible in colloquial English in some cases has a counterpart in Italian -cf. Burzio (1986, 77). On interesting variation concerning agreement within Catalan, see Rigau (2005).
[26] Cf. also Belletti (2005, 18).
[27] Conversely the non-colloquial (i) has no counterpart with *there*:
(i) ?his then wife; ?the then president
(ii) *his there wife; *the there president
(i) seems more like:
(iii) the president then
i.e. more like the temporal counterpart of a locative, rather than like the temporal counterpart of a deictic.

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

(64) That there/*then car ain't no good

A statement touching on all the facts of this section is:

(65) Locatives are closer to deictics than are temporals

More specifically, locatives can be formed by combining a deictic with silent PLACE, yielding what I have been calling locative *there* (or *here*). This in effect gives locatives the possibility of being phonetically indistinguishable from the non-locative deictic *there* seen in (60), (62), (63) and probably in one (perhaps the only - see note 5) reading of (64).

The idea behind (65) is that the proper analysis of *then* in sentences like:

(66) They were happy (back) then

cannot be as simple as the proper analysis of locative *there*. Put another way, although locative *there* is deictic *there* combined with PLACE, temporal *then* cannot simply correspond to a deictic element combined with TIME. This property of temporals is probably not to be understood in terms of silent TIME being systematically unavailable, given the double possibility indicated in:

(67) We'll be at your place in two hours

(68) We'll be at your place in two hours' time

which makes TIME seems appropriate for (67) (see Kayne, 2007).

It may rather be that silent TIME requires a modifier that is itself specified for 'time' (as is (*two*) *hours* in (67)), whereas PLACE is not so demanding. Alternatively put, both TIME and PLACE require a modifier at least partially specified for, respectively, 'time' or 'place'.[28] The difference, then, would be that there is some partial overlap between 'location' and 'deixis' itself, but no comparable partial overlap between 'time' and 'deixis'.[29] In effect, location would then be seen as a more concrete, narrowed down (via PLACE) counterpart of deixis, whereas time would not be.

From this perspective, (66) can be thought of as:

(69) ...then TIME

where temporal *then* is itself specified for time (and requires TIME) - in a way that distinguishes it sharply from deictic *there*, which is not specified for location (and does not need to cooccur with PLACE, though it can). There is consequently no derivation available for (61) that could track the derivation of (60) (that was in effect sketched in (35), which is repeated here):

---

[28] The PLACE found in:
(i) Let's go over to John's tonight
is a silent counterpart of the *place* found in:
(ii) Let's go over to John's place tonight
which conveys more than just location - it seems close to 'home', in a way that recalls Longobardi (1996).

[29] On probably related differences between locatives and temporals, see Starke (2001).

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

(70) ...[there a book]... → raising of 'a book'
...a book$_i$ ... [there t$_i$]... → merger of V
...is a book$_i$ ... [there t$_i$]... → remnant movement
...[there t$_i$]$_k$ is a book$_i$ ... t$_k$...

In addition to there being no expletive *then* parallel to expletive *there*, we can also note that there is no modified expletive *there*:

(71) Are there problems with your proposal?

(72) *Are over/right there problems with your proposal?

Since expletive *there* is a subcase of deictic *there* and since deictic *there* in general disallows modification (cf. also (40)):[30]

(73) *That over/right there car ain't no good

the unacceptability of (72) is expected.
There is no expletive *here* parallel to expletive *there*, either:[31]

(74) *Are here problems with your proposal?

which means that *here* cannot successfully appear in a derivation like (70). We can express this restriction as:

(75) *Here* can only appear within a definite DP

In effect, *there* is more 'neutral' than *here*,[32] with this difference in turn probably to be related to what I think are similar differences between *that* and *this*, e.g.:

(76) He's not all that/*all this smart

(77) The behavior of their son is somewhat different from that/*this of their daughter.

and even with what we call complementizer *that*:

(78) They think that/*this everything is fine

One (plausible) implication of (75) is that *here* must be contained within a definite DP

[30] Possible is:
(i) that car over there
but here we have locative *there*, i.e. deictic *there* combined with PLACE, with *over* keyed to PLACE.
[31] Possible is:
(i) Here are several problems for you
but this is probably an instance of a preposed locative *here*, i.e. with PLACE.
[32] Cf. Dasgupta (1992) and Jayaseelan and Hariprasad (2001).
Here, this and *these* may contain a first-person feature or morpheme that does not have or at least can fail to have a counterpart with *there, that* and *those.*

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

in both of the following, despite there being no overt definite article - in addition to some silent indicator of definiteness, (79) contains PLACE and (80) THING:

(79) They live here

(80) We hereby declare...

Both locative *there* and the *there* of archaic *thereof* (and non-archaic *thereby*) have counterparts with *where*:

(81) Where do they live?

(82) Whereof have they spoken? (archaic)

(83) the plan whereby we...

Expletive *there* does not:[33]

(84) Where is there/*where a problem?

In this respect the deictic *there* that we call expletive behaves as the deictic *there* preceding overt nouns (in non-standard English):

(85) that there car

(86) *that where car; *this where car; *a where car; *some where car

If *where* is not a deictic element at all, then (84) is not surprising.[34]

In summary to these last sections, what we call expletive *there* is an instance of deictic *there* initially occurring within an indefinite DP, and then being split away from it, as indicated in (70).

10. Expletive *ghe* and *ci* in possessive sentences

As earlier (cf. the discussion of (30)), I follow Burzio (1986) in taking Italian *ci* in existential sentences to be strongly similar to English *there*, apart from the fact that *ci* ends up in object clitic position, whereas *there* ends up in subject position. An example of Italian existential *ci* is:

(87) C'è un libro sul tavolo
'there is a book on-the table'

The derivation of (87) will resemble that of (70), modulo the final landing site, and similarly for Paduan *ghe* in:

[33] Cf. Chomsky (1995, 392), whose argument against (an earlier version of) Moro (1997) does not carry over to the present proposal.
[34] If *there*, *here* and *where* do form a natural class of deictics (see Kayne, to appear) then more needs to be said.

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

(88) Ghe ze un libro...
'there is a book...'

For a certain subset of Italian speakers, the expletive *ci* of (87) can also appear in simple possessive sentences such as:[35]

(89) Gianni c'ha una sorella
'G *ci* has a sister'

For the speakers in question (89) is possible without any locative interpretation being associated with it, i.e. it can correspond perfectly to English:

(90) John has a sister

In the Italian of the relevant speakers, the presence of *ci* in (89) is generally not obligatory. In many dialects of Italy such a clitic (i.e. the corresponding deictic clitic, e.g. *ghe* in Paduan) often is obligatory in the equivalent of (89)/(90) (cf. Moro, 1997; p.237).[36] It seems virtually certain, as Moro suggests, that this *ci* or *ghe* in possessive sentences is an expletive clitic and is in fact the same expletive clitic as the one found in existential sentences like (87) and (88).

The question is why (some) Italian and many dialects of Italy should allow an expletive at all in possessive sentences like (89). I think the answer is to be found in Szabolcsi's (1983; 1994) analysis of simple possessive sentences in Hungarian. Her proposal, mentioned earlier, is essentially that possessive sentences are based on existentials. The derivation of simple possessive sentences tracks that of existential sentences (which are taken to have a single verb that takes a single argument (apart from a possible additional locative)), with an important twist.

In possessive sentences like (90) in Hungarian, the possessor originates within that single argument of the existential and raises out of it, picking up dative Case on the way. Transposition of Szabolcsi's analysis to English (Kayne, 1993) has the possessor in English raising out of the same single argument of the existential.

There are, however, two (linked) differences between Hungarian and English; the possessor in English ends up with nominative Case (apart from ECM contexts) and the verb in English must be *have* rather than *be*, as seen in (90). (In the

[35] (89) becomes (much) more widely accepted if expletive *ci* cooccurs with an accusative or quantitative clitic:
(i) Una sorella, ce l'ha anche Gianni
'a sister there it has also G'
(ii) Gianni ce n'ha due
'G there of-them has two'
in a way that recalls the improvement in Italian non-dislocated clitic doubling attributable to a second clitic - Cinque (1990, 178).
In possessive sentences, this *ci* cannot undergo clitic climbing:
(iii) *Ci vorrei avere una sorella
'there I-would-like to-have a sister'
unless accompanied (perhaps pied-piped) by another clitic, as in:
(iv) Una bella casa, ce la vorrei avere anch'io
'a beautiful house, there it I-would-like to-have also I'
In addition, there are restrictions preventing *ci* from appearing (postverbally) in non-finite contexts, in many cases. All of this needs further study.

[36] In many dialects, there is a *ghe* with auxiliary 'have', too. The source for those instances of *ghe* may lie with the nominalization-like character of past participles.

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

Hungarian counterpart of (90), *John* would bear dative Case and the verb would be existential *be*).

Szabolcsi's idea that possessive sentences like (90) embed an existential structure within them clearly makes the appearance of expletive *ci* in (89) less surprising (and similarly for the relevant dialects). In effect, (89) has 'inherited' its expletive *ci* from the existential embedded within it.

To see what the derivations might look like, let's begin with one (modeled on (70)) for:

(91) There is a sister of John's in our class.

Setting aside the locative *in our class*, the derivation proceeds as follows:

(92) ...[there a sister of John's]$_{\text{indef.DP}}$... $\rightarrow$ raising of 'a sister of John's'
...[a sister of John's]$_i$...[there t_i]... $\rightarrow$ merger of V
...is [a sister of John's]$_i$...[there t_i]... $\rightarrow$ remnant movement
...[there t_i]$_k$ is [a sister of John's]$_i$...t_k...

Transposing to Italian (89) gives:

(93) ...[ci una sorella di Gianni]$_{\text{indef.DP}}$... $\rightarrow$ raising of 'una sorella di Gianni'
...[una sorella di Gianni]$_i$...[ci t_i]... $\rightarrow$ merger of V
...è [una sorella di Gianni]$_i$...[ci t_i]... $\rightarrow$ remnant movement
...[ci t_i]$_k$ è [una sorella di Gianni]$_i$...t_k...

If the derivation stopped here, it would correspond to the existential sentence:

(94) C'è una sorella di Gianni... ('there is a sister of G...')

Extending the derivation in (93) along Szabolcsi's lines amounts to saying that in Italian the possessor *Gianni* can subsequently raise out of the phrase 'una sorella di Gianni', ending up in subject position. With the necessary appearance of 'have' instead of 'be', this yields (89). The last step (abstracting away from the question whether 'have' is in the numeration or not and also from the question of the preposition *di*) is then:

(95) ...[ci t_i]$_k$ ha [una sorella Gianni]$_i$...t_k... $\rightarrow$ raising of the possessor
...Gianni$_m$ [ci t_i]$_k$ ha [una sorella t_m]$_i$...t_k...

Again, this allows us to make sense of the presence of expletive *ci* in such possessive sentences - *ci* (and similarly for *ghe* in the relevant dialects) has been carried over into such possessive sentences from the existential substructure embedded in them.

In contrast, of course, expletive *there* cannot appear in the corresponding English simple possessive sentences:

(96) *John has there a sister.

(96) is not acceptable and (97) is not a simple possessive sentence, i.e. its *there* must

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

be interpreted as a locative, parallel to (98):

(97) John has a sister there

(98) John has a sister in Chicago

This restriction on English, as compared with some Italian and many Italian dialects, is plausibly to be related to the fact that expletive *there*, unlike expletive *ci* or *ghe*, occupies a subject position.[37] Thus the impossibility of (96) could be attributed to 'competition' between the expletive and the possessor for the same position. Alternatively, in part, one might say that in the spirit of relativized minimality (Rizzi, 1990) the movement of the possessor to the highest subject position is blocked in (96) by the presence of expletive *there* in an intervening subject position.

11. Comparative syntax of possessives and existentials

The account just suggested for (96), although it may well be on the right track for English, does not extend to the fact that the French expletive *y* that is a close counterpart of Italian *ci* never occurs in French possessive sentences, in any variety of French, as far as I know:

(99) Jean (*y) a une soeur
'J (there) has a sister'

The reason that (99) with expletive *y* is impossible cannot be exactly the reason suggested for English (96); the proposal for English does not carry over to French because French expletive *y* is in an object clitic position (just like Italian *ci*) and not in subject position. Let me therefore propose a separate account for French (which will in turn not carry back over to English, as it arguably should not). This account of (99) will, in line with earlier discussion, involve the syntax of existentials.

In existentials, French has:

(100) Il y a un livre sur la table
'it there has a book on the table'

with *y* an object clitic-like expletive parallel to Italian *ci* not only in position, but also in that *y*, like *ci*, occurs elsewhere as a locative (with PLACE), as in (17), repeated here:

(101) Jean y va
'J there goes'

[37] If the contrast in:
(i) John has a sister
(ii) *John has the sister
is due to the same (definiteness) effect found with existentials illustrated in (51), we might be led to postulate a silent *there* in (i) parallel to the overt *ci* of (89). This silent *there* would not interfere with the raising of the possessor (for reasons to be made precise - cf. Kayne (2006)), but it would call for the kind of splitting seen in (70) that leads to the definiteness effect. For relevant discussion, see Szabolcsi (1986).

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

and also with THING (and a silent P), as in (7), repeated here:

(102) Jean y pense
'J there thinks'

Unlike Italian, though, French existential sentences show what seems to be a second expletive, the subject clitic *il*, as seen in (100). (Furthermore, the verb in French is 'have' rather than 'be' - both Italian and English have 'be').

The fact that French 'have' cooccurs in (100) with expletive *y* recalls the cooccurrence of Italian 'have' with expletive *ci* in (89), and suggests that French (100), like Italian (89), contains, despite appearances, a possessor subject.

The most natural interpretation of this conclusion is, I think, that the possessor subject in question in French is the subject clitic pronoun *il*. Thinking of Chomsky (1981, 325), a way to put this is to say that the *il* of (100) is a 'quasi-argument' (rather than a true argument).

The status of the *il* of (100) is then significantly similar to that of the *il* of French weather sentences like:

(103) Il pleut
'it rains'

with which it shares the property of being zero (rather than the usual accusative *le*/*l'*) in accusative contexts:

(104) ?Un malentendu (*l')a fait y avoir trop d'enfants à la soirée
'a misunderstanding has made there have too-many of children at the party'

Although embedding an existential like *There were too many children at the party* under a causative in French is somewhat marginal (perhaps as in English), the result is clearly, as seen in (104), appreciably more acceptable without *le/l'* than with it. This is the same property that one finds with weather verbs:[38]

(105) Les savants sont maintenant capables de (*le) faire pleuvoir
'the scientists are now capable of making to-rain'

The subject *il* of French existentials also shares with the *il* of French weather sentences the ability to control PRO (much as in Chomsky's discussion of English; cf. also Kayne (1979, 713)):

(106) Il pourrait y avoir du pain sans y avoir de l'eau
'it could there to-have of-the bread without there to-have of the water'
'there could be bread without there being water'

(107) Il peut neiger sans pleuvoir
'it can to-snow without to-rain'

Note that in the French existential control example (106) *il* does not appear in the

[38] Why exactly *le* is impossible here remains to be understood. Note the contrast with English:
(i) Scientists are now capable of making *(it) be very cold

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

infinitival part (it is replaced by PRO), while *y* does. This is indirectly related to the fact that English *there* cannot be a controller:

(108) There can't possibly be a solution without *(there) being a problem

(109) *There was a problem before being a solution

The reason that English prohibits control with expletive *there*, in contrast to (106), is that expletive *there* (like *y*) is not a quasi-argument (but rather a deictic element that is not an argument at all), contrary to *il*. (106) can thus have PRO as the subject of the infinitival phrase beginning with *sans*, whereas in (108) and (109) the subject of the gerund cannot be PRO; put another way, in both languages the existential argument within the controlled infinitive or gerund needs to be merged with a deictic - in French that deictic *y* can cooccur with PRO since they occupy different types of positions, contrary to what holds in English.

In summary, neither of the two elements that might have appeared to be expletives in French (100) is actually an expletive. The *il* is a quasi-argument, and the *y* is a deictic modifier that originates within the associate.

As for the derivation of a French existential sentence such as (100), the best way to see it is to begin by going back to (93)-(95), consolidated here as the derivation of:

(110) Gianni c'ha una sorella
'G there has a sister' = (89)

which is the Italian possessive sentence containing expletive *ci*. The derivation goes as follows:[39]

(111) ...[ci una sorella Gianni]$_{indef.DP}$... → raising of 'una sorella Gianni'
...[una sorella Gianni]$_i$...[ci t_i]... → merger of V
...ha [una sorella Gianni]$_i$...[ci t_i]... → remnant movement
...[ci t_i]$_k$ ha [una sorella Gianni]$_i$...t_k... → raising of the possessor
...Gianni$_m$ [ci t_i]$_k$ ha [una sorella t_m]$_i$...t_k...

The proposal now is that (100) has a similar derivation, except that quasi-argument possessor *il* replaces the full possessor argument *Gianni*; *un livre* replaces *una sorella*; and *y* replaces *ci*:

(112) ...[y un livre il]$_{indef.DP}$... → raising of 'un livre il'
...[un livre il]$_i$...[y t_i]... → merger of V
...a [un livre il]$_i$...[y t_i]... → remnant movement
...[y t_i]$_k$ a [un livre il]$_i$...t_k... → raising of the possessor
...il$_m$ [y t_i]$_k$ a [un livre t_m]$_i$...t_k...

[39] Here I'm taking *ha* = 'have' to be in the numeration, and abstracting away from the question of preposition incorporation - on which, see Kayne (1993), Rigau (2005) and references cited in those works.

The last step of the derivation in (111) involves the extraction of the possessor from within a previously moved constituent. In this respect it recalls (vs. Wexler and Culicover (1980, 278)):
(i) That's the problem that we explained to John only part of. (cf. Kayne (1994, 74))

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

Consider in turn the result of replacing *un livre* in (100) by *une soeur de Jean* ('a sister of J'):

(113) Il y a une soeur de Jean dans la cour
'it there has a sister of J in the courtyard'

This is a sentence whose derivation (abstracting away from the preposition *de*) must begin with '[y [une soeur Jean] il]$_{indef.DP}$' in place of '[y [un livre] il]$_{indef.DP}$'. That is, the derivation of (113) must contain an indefinite DP with two possessors, argument *Jean* and quasi-argument *il*. This is not implausible (as an instance of recursion), in particular given the existence in English of the quite acceptable (to me):

(114) (?)This painting of yours of mine is now quite valuable

in the sense of 'this painting that you did that I own'[40].
Returning to French (99), repeated here:

(115) Jean (*y) a une soeur
'J (there) has a sister'

I think the answer to why it is impossible with expletive *y*, as opposed to Italian (110) being possible with expletive *ci*, lies in the following (unidirectional) comparative syntax correlation:

(116) If a Romance language allows a clitic counterpart of expletive *there* in its possessive sentences, then its existential sentences have the verb *be* (and not *have*).

Particularly striking here is Catalan, whose deictic clitic *hi* is in other ways very much like Italian *ci*. Yet Catalan seems to be like French, rather than like Italian, with respect to (115). (116) claims that Catalan lacks expletive *hi* in its possessive sentences because Catalan has 'have' in its existentials, like French.

The next question is why (116) should hold. What I would like to propose as an answer to that question depends on a strong 'uniformity'[41] assumption about existential sentences (and hence about possessive sentences, given my adoption and extension of Szabolcsi's analysis), namely that all (Romance) languages have a quasi-argument possessor in their existentials (and hence in their possessive sentences), of the sort seen overtly in French *il*. (This implies that an existential sentence in which the associate contains a full argument possessor actually has two possessors.)

Returning to (116) and to the unacceptability of (115) with expletive *y*, we can now understand (116) as follows. A language that allows an expletive deictic clitic in its possessive sentences, as do Italian and Paduan, must of necessity be a language in which the presence of that expletive clitic does not force subject position to be filled by the quasi-argument possessor that by hypothesis is found in all simple possessive

[40] The fact that (114) is so much better than:
(i) *My your painting is valuable
which presumably has something to do with *of*, needs to be elucidated.
[41] Cf. Chomsky (2001, 2).

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

sentences.[42] But in existentials, French and Catalan do have the quasi-argument possessor raising to subject position. (In French, the quasi- argument possessor must generally be pronounced, as opposed to Catalan.) Consequently, we can exclude French (115) with expletive *y* by taking the raising of the quasi-argument possessor in French to be more general:

(117) In French (and similarly for Catalan), the quasi-argument possessor must, if expletive *y* is present, raise to subject position.

This will exclude (115), as desired. A more general formulation of (117) would be:

(118) If a language has quasi-argument possessor raising in the presence of an overt deictic expletive clitic in some cases (in particular in existentials), then it has it in all cases (thereby blocking full argument possessor raising in the presence of the overt expletive).

Again, (115) is correctly excluded.

If *y* is not pronounced, then the French (and Catalan) quasi-possessor does not (and cannot, for reasons to be determined) raise to subject position, in which case nothing blocks the raising of the full argument possessor *Jean*, yielding the acceptable variant of (115).

Note that in the derivation (112) what is raised into subject position cannot, even in the absence of overt *il*, be the associate itself:

(119) *Un livre y a sur la table

This might be due to the fact that in that derivation *un livre* is not a full DP argument, having been raised out in the first step from within the argument phrase containing *y*;[43] alternatively, there might be an intervention/relativized minimality effect, with *y* constituting a block.

In Italian and in the dialects of Italy, the verb in existentials is *be* rather than *have*. I interpret this to mean that in those languages the quasi-argument possessor has not raised to nominative subject position. The fact that it does not have to, even in the presence of expletive *ci* or *ghe*, will make it possible for the full argument possessor to do so even in their presence, yielding sentences like (110), in a way compatible with (116). (On the fact that English acts differently, despite having *be* in existentials, see the discussion of (96).)

12. Other languages and no languages

Some Scandinavian languages are like English in having existentials with *be* and with a counterpart (*der*) of subject *there*.[44] This *der* can be taken to originate as a deictic modifier of the associate, as discussed for English. Other Scandinavian languages can

[42] At least in possessive sentences of the type under discussion, with an indefinite possessee.
Probably the text approach should be extended to cases like:
(i) John has it/your pencil in his pocket
though with additional structure - cf. in part note 21.
[43] Cf. Rigau (2005, note 22).
[44] Cf. Allan et al. (1995, sect. 407).

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

have *be* with a subject (*det*) that seems more like English *it* or *that*.[45] This *det* might be akin to French *il*, i.e. it might be a quasi-argument possessor, though that would leave open (for the time being) why the verb is *be*; alternatively, this *det* might have some other status (perhaps related to the *it* of clefts) that remains to be elucidated.

In Swiss German and other southern varieties of German, existentials can have the verb *have*, with a subject *es* that corresponds in other ways to English *it* (examples from Thomas Leu):

(120) Es het es buaech uf em tisch
'it has a book on the table'

This subject *es* looks very much like a quasi-argument counterpart of French *il*. Although in (120) there is no overt element corresponding to French *y*, Swiss German also allows:

(121) Da het s es buaech uf em tisch
'there has it a book on the table'

with an additional *da* that may correspond to *y*. Where a Swiss German existential has *es het...* a standard German existential would have *es gibt...*, with (probably) the same *es*, but with the verb 'give'. This use of 'give' in existentials has a (non-productive) counterpart in English:

(122) What gives?

In Spanish and Portuguese, the verb in existentials is a form of *have*, without there being any visible counterpart of French *y* (except perhaps in the present tense in Spanish). Since Spanish and Portuguese have no visible *y* elsewhere, either, they plausibly have a silent one in existentials. In addition, they are like Catalan in having no overt counterpart of French *il*.

As we can see, there is substantial variation in the form of existentials across Romance and Germanic. This should not prevent us, however, from 'seeing' what is not present. One gap of interest can be illustrated with an (unacceptable) English example:

(123) *There has a book on the table.

Subject deictic expletive *there* is not compatible with *have* in English. But as far as I know, no Romance or Germanic language has an exact counterpart of (123), with verb 'have' and a deictic element (rather than a quasi-argument) in subject position. This follows directly from the assumption made earlier that *have* requires a possessor subject,[46] whether quasi-argument (French *il*, (Swiss) German *es*) or full argument. Combined with the radically different status of *there*, which (like French *y*, Italian *ci*,

[45] Cf. Holmes and Hinchliffe (1994, 140).

[46] (123) contrasts with:
(i) There has to be a book somewhere
(ii) There have been lots of problems
indicating that auxiliary-like *have* (and similarly in other languages) does not require a possessor subject in the same way, despite other similarities with main verb *have* that led Kayne (1993) to assimilate the two to a significant degree.

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

Paduan *ghe*, Catalan *hi*) is a deictic modifier and not an argument or quasi-argument, this accounts for the general absence of (123).

I have been assuming that the French type of existential seen in (100), with verb 'have' and with deictic *y* in object clitic position and quasi-argument possessor *il* in subject (clitic) position, is closely matched by Catalan (example from Rigau (2005, 777)):

(124) Hi ha una biblioteca nova
'there has a library new'

with the single difference that Catalan, in a way related to its being a null subject language, has a silent counterpart of *il*. Less immediate is the answer to the question where the quasi-argument possessor is in Italian existentials:

(125) C'è un libro sul tavolo
'there is a book on-the table'

Since Italian *ci* is not in subject position, Italian could perhaps (though not if (118) is correct) be like Catalan in having a silent *il* there. Alternatively, the quasi-argument possessor in Italian is silent and oblique (thinking of the fact that argument possessors are oblique in many languages[47]).

13. Existentials and causers

As alluded to just above (122), German has one existential with the verb *give*:

(126) Es gibt keine Lösung
'it gives no solution'

Since *give* is normally causative, it seems odd at first glance that (126) could have an existential interpretation. The various languages that use *have* in their existentials (French, Catalan, Spanish, Portuguese, Swiss German and others) appear not to pose a problem of this sort, insofar as *have* is normally not thought of as causative. Yet English *have* can be causative, in sentences with an agentive subject:

(127) We'll have them call you

Somewhat similarly, although English *get* seems straightforwardly like an inchoative of *have* in:

(128) They got a large inheritance

and like an inchoative of *be* in:

[47] For interesting discussion, see Hoekstra (1994).
Even if oblique, the quasi-argument in Italian must be able to be a controller, given (from Burzio (1986, 174)):
(i) Potrebbe esserci del pane senza esserci dell'acqua
'could to-be there of-the bread without to-be there of-the water' = 'there could be bread without there being water'

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

(129) They got sick

get can also be causative:

(130) They got him arrested

(131) They got us talking to each other

(132) They got us to lend them money

A possible interpretation of these facts is that (126) actually does have causative content, and so do existentials with *have* in the various languages mentioned (and arguably, then, existentials with *be* in languages like English and Italian). This causative content could be understood by thinking of a sentence like *There's no solution* as similar to:

(133) Something has caused there to be no solution

in which case the *es* of (126) could be taken to be a quasi-argument causer. That in turn would lead to the possibility that French *il* in existential *il y a...* is also a quasi-argument causer[48] rather than a quasi-argument possessor, and similarly for the other quasi-argument possessors postulated earlier.

Postulating the presence of a non-agentive causer where none is visible is also a tempting option in the case of what are sometimes called 'anti-causative' verbs such as *sink*, which enter into pairs like:

(134) The boat sank

(135) The navy/the storm sank the boat

In (135) the causer can be agentive (*the navy*) or non-agentive (*the storm*). At the same time, there is a well-known argument concerning a possible implicit argument in (134), based on the contrast:[49]

(136) The boat was sunk in order to collect the insurance

(137) *The boat sank in order to collect the insurance

The deviance of (137) does seem to indicate that (134)/(137) contains no implicit

[48] Leading to the possibility that other instances of French *il* are, too, for example, those of:
(i) Il faut que vous partiez
'it needs that you leave'
(ii) Il me semble que vous avez raison
'it me seems that you...'
(iii) Il est important que...
'it is important that...'
(iv) Il est arrivé quelqu'un
'it is arrived someone'
On (ii), see Rooryck (1997).

[49] Cf. Williams (1985).

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

agent, contrary to (136). But it does not exclude the possibility that (134) contains an unpronounced non- agentive causer.

Saying that both (126) and (134) contain a non-obvious causer argument is of some interest, if we return to the question of the variation within Romance concerning *have* and *be* in existentials, specifically to the difference between French, which has *have*, and Italian, which has *be*. The reason for thinking this is of interest lies in the fact that French and Italian also differ with respect to verbs like *sink*, and do so in a way quite parallel to the verb difference in existentials, insofar as French, with anti-causatives like *sink*, uses auxiliary *have* with past participles, while Italian uses auxiliary *be*:

(138) Le bâteau a coulé hier French
'the boat has sunk yesterday'

(139) La nave è affondata ieri Italian
'the boat is sunk yesterday'

In other words, there may be a generalization that spans existentials and (past-participial) anti- causatives (a more natural class from the perspective of this section than usually assumed), to the effect that French uses *have* where Italian uses *be*.[50]

14. Limitations on deictic *there* as expletive

In (my) colloquial English, expletive *there* occurs only with *be*. Although the following are possible in some register(s) of English, they are for me impossible in colloquial English:[51]

(140) There exist solutions to all these problems

(141) There have arrived several letters for you

In this respect, colloquial English is like both Italian and French, whose deictic expletive *ci* and *y* are limited to existentials with *be* (in Italian) and *have* (in French) and which do not occur in the counterparts of (140) and (141). In contrast, as discussed by Burzio (1986, chap. 2),
Piedmontese expletive clitic *ye* is found more widely, occurring as it does with all unaccusatives.

Why Piedmontese should be freer in this regard than Italian or French is not

[50] French and Italian differ in what seems to be the same fashion, when it comes to the auxiliary used with the past participle of *seem, appear, disappear* and *be* itself (i.e. French uses auxiliary *have* and Italian, auxiliary *be*) - cf. Burzio (1986, 138). Whether some or all of these should be integrated into the text discussion is left an open question, as is the question why *die* takes auxiliary *be* in both languages.
The contrast between (138) and (139) also seems to be mimicked by French vs. Italian periphrasic causatives (indirectly supporting the text proposal), in the sense that they can passivize in Italian but not in French - cf. Kayne (1985).

[51] As opposed to:
(i) There they go
like:
(ii) Here they come
which do not involve expletive *there*, despite having some special properties.

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

clear (perhaps there is a link to the fact that Piedmontese object clitics generally follow past participles in a way that Italian and French object clitics do not).

Nor is it clear why *be* is singled out by Italian and colloquial English - perhaps it is that *be* is associated with less structure than any other verb - or even that *be* is not really a verb (thinking of Postma (1993); cf. also Baker (2003, sect. 2.4)). Considering the partial derivation given earlier:

(142) ...[there a book]... → raising of 'a book'
...a book$_i$ ... [there t$_i$]... → merger of V
...is a book$_i$ ... [there t$_i$]... → remnant movement
...[there t$_i$]$_k$ is a book$_i$ ... t$_k$...

it might be that the landing site needed for the first movement step is unavailable in these languages except with *be* (and similarly for *have* in French).

In Piedmontese, expletive *ye* does not occur with transitives, or even (Luigi Burzio, p.c.) with unaccusatives embedded under an overt causative. Again, it may be that the first step of (142) cannot proceed in the face of the extra structure associated with transitives.

Although French unaccusatives do not show expletive *y*, they do show a subject clitic *il* that might be taken to be a (different) kind of expletive:

(143) Il est arrivé trois lettres
'it is arrived three letters'

Alternatively, this *il* might turn out to be the quasi-argument *il* discussed earlier - cf. the discussion beginning at (100) and note 48. (Note that this *il* is not, strictly speaking, limited to unaccusatives (cf. Pollock, 1998; note 11)).

15. Datives

The last case of parametric variation having to do with expletives that I will touch on has to do with the topic that this paper opened with, namely the deictic clitic *ghe* that is widely found in North Italian dialects in dative sentences where one might not have expected it. Put another way, these North Italian dialects differ from standard French and from standard Italian, which have retained an overt specifically third person dative clitic.

The question how best to understand this difference in syntactic behavior rests in part on how one analyzes the *ghe* of, for example, Paduan sentences like:

(144) Ghe dago un libro (a G)
'*ghe* I-give a book (to G)'

One of the proposals made earlier was that such sentences contain a silent dative clitic:

(145) DATCL ghe dago un libro (a G)

I have also argued in favor of taking all instances of *ghe*, like all instances of *there* in English, to be the same element.

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

In this final section, I would like to take the more specific position that the *ghe* of (144) is the expletive subtype of deictic *ghe*, i.e. that it originates, like all the other expletive deictics so far discussed, within the associate (which in (144) is *un libro*).[52] This proposal rests on two points, the first being that sentences like (144), with a verb corresponding to *give*, can, following a long tradition, be thought of as arising through the embedding of a *have*-like structure within a causative one. The second is that *have*-sentences in a certain number of Italian dialects and for a certain number of Italian speakers show an overt expletive, as discussed earlier beginning with (89).

The idea, then, is that expletive *ghe* appears in (144) via 'inheritance'. Dative sentences embed within them possessive sub-sentences that can contain an expletive, in turn inherited from the existential subpart of the possessive structure itself. Thus the *ghe* of (144) is in essence the familiar expletive of existentials.

Needless to say, things are not quite this simple. But we can simply illustrate the first point using French periphrastic causatives of the sort that dativize the embedded subject:

(146) Ils ont fait avoir un prix à cet étudiant
'they have made have a prize to that student'

This sentence, which has the approximate interpretation of:

(147) Ils ont donné un prix à cet étudiant
'they have given...'

embeds under the causative verb *faire* a sentence containing *avoir* ('to-have'). The subject of the embedded verb *avoir* ends up as the 'object' of the (dative) preposition *à*, in a way discussed in Kayne (2004b).

Assume now that a *have*-sentence embedded under a causative can itself contain an expletive (e.g. *ghe*), as we know to be visibly possible for *have*-sentences in various dialects. Then in the relevant dialects, this expletive (deictic) *ghe* will be visible in their counterparts of (146) and, assuming a parallel derivation, of (147).

In which case we have an answer to the question we started with, namely why it is that *ghe*, an apparent locative (but really a deictic element, as argued above), appears in dative sentences like (144) in the first place. Rather than reflecting syncretism, the presence of *ghe* in (144) more precisely reflects a piece of the underlying (in part existential) syntactic structure of such sentences.[53]

Left open is the question why we don't see this expletive in all Romance languages (or in all languages). It does not appear to be possible to say that *ghe* can be found in dative sentences only if it is found in possessive sentences, since, as Paola Benincà points out (p.c.), Bellunese has *ghe* in datives but not in possessives.[54] Nor,

[52] (144) is also possible with definite *el libro* ('the book') in place of indefinite *un libro*. See notes 21 and 42, as well as the possibility, thinking of Koopman (2003; 2005), that definites are or can be built upon indefinites, in relative clause fashion.

[53] This will have to be extended to cover the whole range of dative sentences. Guglielmo Cinque (p.c.) asks why expletive *ghe* can cooccur with a silent DATCL in (144)/(145), yet never seems to be able to license a silent ACC-CL. In sentences with just an accusative object, the answer should be that there is no source for expletive *ghe* (i.e. no existential substructure) in the first place. In ditransitive sentences, we had an example with a silent accusative in Sardinian in (28); the contrast with Paduan remains to be elucidated.

[54] Perhaps like Bellunese is the popular French described by Postal (1990, 188, note 19) (unless the *y* there turns out to be a dative Case morpheme).

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

thinking of Italian itself, does the converse seem to hold, since there are Italian speakers who have *ci* in possessives without having it in datives. Ultimately, the answer will probably involve the question of whether or not clitics belonging to the embedded sentence of a causative structure such as (146) can successfully surface.[55]

The question also arises as to why *ghe* (or *ci* or *y* or *there*) appears in the first place in existentials in some languages. French existentials with *il y a...* indicate clearly that filling a subject position cannot be a general answer, since in French the subject position is filled by quasi-argument *il*, so that the presence of deictic expletive *y* must rest on other considerations.

Part of the answer may be that these deictic elements are an obligatory part of all DPs (including indefinites) in all languages,[56] with various factors combining to determine whether they are pronounced, in one or another language, in one or another context.

Conclusion

Expletive *there* and its closest counterparts in other languages are not expletives in Chomsky's sense (merged directly into a sentential Spec position). They are instead instances of deictic elements originating within their associate.[57] In some languages, e.g. Paduan, these expletives can be 'imported' into possessive sentences and (from there) into dative sentences, giving the impression in the latter case of syncretism between deictic clitic and dative clitic, but the correct, more syntactic and less morphological, analysis is that in such languages the deictic clitic is not a dative clitic, though it cooccurs with a dative clitic that is silent.

References

Aboh, E.O. (2004) *The Morphosyntax of Complement-Head Sequences. Clause Structure and Word Order Patterns in Kwa*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Allan, R., P. Holmes and T. Lundskaer-Nielsen (1995) *Danish. A Comprehensive Grammar*, Routledge, London.

Baker, M. (2003) *Lexical Categories. Verbs, Nouns, and Adjectives*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Belletti, A. (2005) "Extended Doubling and the VP Periphery," *Probus*, 17, 1-35.

Benincà, P. (1989) "Friaulisch: Interne Sprachgeschichte. Grammatik. Evoluzione della grammatica," in *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik*, Niemeyer, Tübingen.

Bennis, H. (1986) *Gaps and Dummies*, Doctoral dissertation, Tilburg University.

[55] For some relevant data, see Kayne (1975), Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980) and Burzio (1986).
We will also need to understand why in some dialects/languages, such as the Carmignano dialect studied by Penello (2004), *ghe* can in dative sentences precede the subject clitic.

[56] Cf. Jayaseelan and Hariprasad (2001).
How exactly to characterize the interpretive contribution to indefinites of *there* remains to be elucidated; cf. the discussion of (75).

[57] This is close to Sabel (2000) (cf. also Moro (2000, 125) and Choe (2006)), with the difference that he takes the expletive to correspond to a D-feature within the associate, whereas I have suggested a reduced relative source (cf. the discussion after (43)) that is compatible with taking *there* to be bi- or perhaps tri-morphemic.
That *there* is at least bi-morphemic is clearly indicated by its parallelism to *here* (and perhaps *where* - cf. note 34), by the plausibility of an initial morpheme *th-* related to the *th-* of *the*, *that*, etc., and by the relation between Dutch *daar* ('there') and Dutch *er* ('-ere').
Possibly, adapting a suggestion of Pierre Pica's, one of the morphemes (other than *th-*) making up *there* is prepositional, thinking also of the fact that the closest counterpart to *there* in Egyptian Arabic is prepositional, as brought to my attention by Maha Aboul-Ela - cf. Brustad (2000, 152).

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

Bernstein, J. (1997) "Demonstratives and reinforcers in Romance and Germanic languages," *Lingua*, 102, 87-113.
Brustad, K.E. (2000) *The Syntax of Spoken Arabic. A Comparative Study of Moroccan, Egyptian, Syrian, and Kuwaiti Dialects*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C.
Burzio, L. (1986) *Italian Syntax. A Government-Binding Approach*, Reidel, Dordrecht.
Choe, H. S. (2006) "The syntax of existential *there* and the structure of nominal expressions", ms.
Chomsky, N. (1981) *Lectures on Government and Binding*, Foris, Dordrecht. Chomsky, N. (1995) *The Minimalist Program*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.
Chomsky, N. (2001) "Derivation by Phase," in M. Kenstowicz (ed.) *Ken Hale. A Life in Language*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1-52.
Cinque, G. (1990) *Types of A'-Dependencies*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.
Cordin P. (1991) "Il raddoppiamento del dativo in trentino", in L. Giannelli (ed.) *Tra Rinascimento e strutture attuali. Saggi di linguistica italiana. Atti del I Convegno della SILFI (Siena, 1990)*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino, 399-410.
Cresti, D. (2003) "Aspects of the Syntax and Semantics of *ne*," in C. Tortora (ed.) *The Syntax of Italian Dialects*, Oxford University Press, New York, 67-101.
Dasgupta, P. (1992) "Pronominality and Deixis in Bangla," *Linguistic Analysis*, 22, 61-77.
Delsing, L.-O. (1993) *The Internal Structure of Noun Phrases in the Scandinavian Languages. A Comparative Study*, Doctoral dissertation, Department of Scandinavian Languages, University of Lund.
Den Dikken, M. (1997) "The Syntax of Possession and the Verb 'Have'," (introduction to) *Lingua*, 101,
Fiengo, R. and J. Higginbotham (1981) "Opacity in NP," *Linguistic Analysis*, 7, 395-421. Heim, I. (1987) "Where Does the Definiteness Restriction Apply? Evidence from the Definiteness of Variables," in E.J. Reuland and A.G.B. ter Meulen (eds.) *The Representation of (In)definiteness*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 21-42.
Hoekstra, T. (1994) "HAVE as BE plus or minus," in G. Cinque, J. Koster, J.-Y. Pollock, L. Rizzi, and R. Zanuttini (eds.) *Paths toward Universal Grammar. Studies in honor of Richard S. Kayne*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 199-215.
Holmes, P. and I. Hinchliffe (1994) *Swedish. A Comprehensive Grammar*, Routledge, London. Jayaseelan, K.A. and M. Hariprasad (2001) "Deixis in Pronouns and Noun Phrases," *Linguistic Analysis*, 31, 132-149.
Johnson, K. (1991) "Object Positions," *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 9, 577-636
Jones, M. A. (1993) *Sardinian Syntax*, Routledge, London.
Kayne, R.S. (1975) *French Syntax. The Transformational Cycle*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.
Kayne, R.S. (1979) "Rightward NP Movement in French and English", *Linguistic Inquiry* 10,710-719.
Kayne, Richard S. (1985) "L'accord du participe passé en français et en italien", *Modèles Linguistiques* VII:73-90 (English translation in Kayne (2000)).
Kayne, Richard S. (1993) "Toward a Modular Theory of Auxiliary Selection," *Studia Linguistica*, 47:3-31 (reprinted in Kayne (2000)).
Kayne, R.S. (1994) *The Antisymmetry of Syntax*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.
Kayne, R.S. (2000) *Parameters and Universals*, Oxford University Press, New York.
Kayne, R.S. (2001) "A Note on Clitic Doubling in French" in G. Cinque and G. Salvi (eds.), *Current Studies in Italian Syntax. Essays offered to Lorenzo Renzi*, Amsterdam: North- Holland 2001 (North-Holland Linguistic Series: Linguistic Variations Volume 59), 189-212 (reprinted in Kayne (2005)).
Kayne, R.S. (2002) "On Some Prepositions That Look DP-internal: English *of* and French *de*", *Catalan Journal of Linguistics*, 1, 71-115 (reprinted in Kayne (2005)).
Kayne, R.S. (2004a) "Here and There" in C. Leclère, E. Laporte, M. Piot & M. Silberztein (eds.) *Syntax, Lexis & Lexicon-Grammar. Papers in Honour of Maurice Gross*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, 253-273 (reprinted in Kayne (2005)).
Kayne, R.S. (2004b) "Prepositions as Probes", in A. Belletti (ed.), *Structures and Beyond*, Oxford University Press, New York, 192-212 (reprinted in Kayne (2005)).
Kayne, R.S. (2005) *Movement and Silence*, Oxford University Press, New York.
Kayne, R.S. (2006) "On Parameters and on Principles of Pronunciation", in H. Broekhuis, N. Corver, R. Huybregts, U. Kleinhenz and J. Koster (eds.) *Organizing Grammar. Linguistic Studies in Honor of Henk van Riemsdijk*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.
Kayne, R.S. (2007) "Several, Few and Many", *Lingua*, 117, 832-858
Kayne, R.S. (to appear) "A Short Note on *where* vs. *place*"
Kayne, R.S. and J.-Y. Pollock (2001) "New Thoughts on Stylistic Inversion", in *Inversion in Romance*,

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

A. Hulk and J.-Y. Pollock (eds.), Oxford University Press, New York, 107-162 (reprinted in Kayne (2005))
Koopman, H. (2003) "The locality of agreement and the structure of the DP in Maasai," in W.E. Griffin (ed.) *The Role of Agreement in Natural Language: TLS 5 Proceedings, Texas Linguistic Forum*, 53, 206-227.
Koopman, H. (2005) "On the Parallelism of DPs and Clauses. Evidence from Kisongo Maasai," in A. Carnie, H. Harley and S.A. Dooley (eds.) *Verb First, On the Syntax of Verb-initial Languages*. John Benjamins, Amsterdam, 281-302.
Leu, T. (2006)"From Greek to Germanic: the Structure of Adjectival Modification", paper presented at GLOW, Barcelona.
Leu, T. (2007) "These HERE Demonstratives", *UPenn Working Papers in Linguistics 13.1: Proceedings of PLC 30*.
Longa, V.M., G. Lorenzo and G. Rigau (1998) "Subject Clitics and Clitic Recycling: Locative Sentences in Some Iberian Romance Languages," *Journal of Linguistics*, 34, 125-164.
Longobardi, G. (1996) "The Syntax of N-Raising: A Minimalist Theory," *OTS Working Papers*, Utrecht University.
Milsark, G. (1974) *Existential Sentences in English*, Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.
Moro, A. (1997) *The raising of predicates. Predicative noun phrases and the theory of clause structure*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
Moro, A. (2000) *Dynamic Antisymmetry*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.
Penello, N. (2004) *Capitolo di morfologia e sintassi del dialetto di Carmignano di Brenta*, Tesi di dottorato, Università di Padova.
Perlmutter, D.M. (1970) "On the Article in English," in M. Bierwisch and K.E. Heidolph (eds.) *Progress in Linguistics*, Mouton, The Hague, 233-248.
Perlmutter, D.M. (1971) *Deep and Surface Structure Constraints in Syntax*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.
Pollock, J.-Y. (1998) "On the Syntax of Subnominal Clitics: Cliticization and Ellipsis," *Syntax*, 1, 300-330.
Postal, P.M. (1990) "French Indirect Object Demotion," in P.M. Postal and B.D. Joseph (eds.) *Studies in Relational Grammar 3*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 104-200.
Postma, G. (1993) "The Syntax of the Morphological Defectivity of *BE*," *HIL Manuscripts*, 3, 31-67.
Postma, G. and J. Rooryck (1996) "Modality and Possession in NPs", in K. Kusumoto (ed.), *Proceedings of NELS 26*, GLSA, Amherst, 273-287.
Riemsdijk, H. van (1978) *A case study in syntactic markedness*, The Peter de Ridder Press, Lisse, Netherlands.
Rigau, G. (2005) "Number Agreement Variation in Catalan Dialects," in G. Cinque and R. Kayne (eds.) *Handbook of Comparative Syntax*, Oxford University Press, New York, 775- 805.
Roberts, I. (1993) "The nature of subject cliticisation in Franco-Provençal Valdôtain", in A. Belletti (ed.) *Syntactic Theory and the Dialects of Italy*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino, 319-353
Rooryck, J. (1997) "On the Interaction between Raising and Focus in Sentential Complementation," *Studia Linguistica*, 51, 1-49.
Rouveret, A. and J.R. Vergnaud (1980) "Specifying Reference to the Subject: French Causatives and Conditions on Representations," *Linguistic Inquiry*, 11, 97-202.
Rizzi, L. (1990) *Relativized Minimality*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.
Sabel, J. (2000) "Expletives as Features", in R. Billerey et al. (eds.) *WCCFL 19 Proceedings*, Cascadilla Press, Somerville, MA, 411-424.
Saeed, J.I. (1993) *Somali Reference Grammar (Second Revised Edition)*, Dunwoody Press, Kensington, Maryland.
Săvescu Ciucivara, O. (2006) "Romanian - a PCC Language?," paper presented at LSRL 36, Rutgers University.
Sichel, I. (2001) *Studies in the Syntax of Pronouns and Features with Particular Reference to Hebrew,* Doctoral dissertation, Graduate Center, CUNY, New York.
Sportiche, D. (2002) "Movement Types and Triggers," *GLOW Newsletter*, 48, 116-117.
Starke, M. (2001) *Move Dissolves into Merge: a Theory of Locality*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Geneva.
Szabolcsi, A. (1983) "The Possessor that Ran Away from Home," *The Linguistic Review*, 3, 89-102.
Szabolcsi, A. (1986) "From the Definiteness Effect to Lexical Integrity," in W. Abraham and S. de Meij (eds.) *Topic, Focus and Configurationality. Papers from the 6th Groningen Grammar Talks, Groningen, 1984*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, 321-348.

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)

Szabolcsi, A. (1994) "The Noun Phrase," in F. Kiefer and K. E. Kiss (eds.) *Syntax and Semantics 27. The Syntactic Structure of Hungarian*, Academic Press, San Diego, 179-274.
Terzi, A. (1999) "Clitic Combinations, their Hosts, and their Ordering," *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 17, 85-121.
Vinet, M.-T. (1977) *Etudes sur le syntagme nominal: la dislocation, l'adjectif 'propre'*, Thèse de doctorat de troisième cycle, University of Paris VIII.
Wexler, K. and P.W. Culicover (1980) *Formal Principles of Language Acquisition*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.
Whitman, J. (1981) "The Internal Structure of NP in Verb Final Languages," in *Papers from the Seventeenth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*, 411-481.
Williams, E. (1985) "PRO and Subject of NP," *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 3, 297- 315.

BDD-A22671 © 2007 Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:01 UTC)