An interpretation for the English existential construction

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Dissertation Information

**Title:** An Interpretation for the English Existential Construction

**Author:** Louise McNally

**Email:** click here to access email

**Homepage:** http://www.upf.edu/pdi/louise-mcnally/

**Institution:** University of California, Santa Cruz, Department of Linguistics

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**Abstract:** This dissertation proposes an interpretation for the English "There"-existential construction on which the construction expresses a property not of an "ordinary" individual, but rather of a description of an individual (formalized as a nominalized function, Chierchia 1984). This property holds of a description at some index if the description is instantiated by some individual in its extension at that index. An additional felicity condition is posited requiring that the instantiating individual correspond to a novel discourse referent. Thus, unlike most previous proposals, the analysis advocated here takes the predicative phrase often found in existential sentences (e.g. "available" in "There was help available") to be an adjunct, rather than a (part of a) complement to the existential predicate.

Chapter 2 discusses the syntax of the construction and presents arguments for treating the final phrase as an adjunct.

A property-theoretic interpretation for the construction is developed in Chapter 3. There, the analysis is shown to make superior predictions concerning, inter alia, the scopal and relativization properties of the postcopular determiner phrase (DP) and to capture similarities between the DP in the existential and the predicate nominal. The definiteness effect associated with the construction is argued not to be a unitary phenomenon: A DP may be excluded from the construction because it fails to denote a nominalized function (e.g. "each student") or because its felicity conditions conflict with the novelty condition imposed by the construction (e.g. "the student").

In Chapter 4, the optional predicative phrase is argued to have the same interpretation as a depictive/circumstantial adjunct; consequently, the chapter begins by presenting an interpretation for depictives and circumstantials. The restriction governing possible final phrases in the existential is shown to reduce to a restriction governing these adjuncts in general. Chapter 4 concludes with an analysis of "eventive" existentials (e.g. "There has been a man shot") on which "a man shot" is argued to be a DP, contra e.g. Milsark 1974 but in accord with e.g. Williams 1984.

Finally, Chapter 5 briefly discusses the predictions of the proposal for data including "list" existentials and "presentational-there" sentences.
General rules of interpretation. English law takes a purposive and commercial approach to the construction of contracts. The starting point for the court is to identify the intention of the contracting parties. This is an objective test; the court is concerned to identify the intention of the parties by reference to "what a reasonable person having all the background knowledge which would have been available to the parties would have understood them to be using the language in the contract to mean". The court looks, therefore, at the contract as a whole and considers not only the existential clause is a clause that refers to the existence or presence of something. Examples in English include the sentences "There is a God" and "There are boys in the yard". The use of such clauses can be considered analogous to existential quantification in predicate logic (often expressed with the phrase "There exist(s)..."). Different languages have different ways of forming and using existential clauses. For details about English, see English grammar: There as pronoun. Start by marking "Existential Psychotherapy and the Interpretation of Dreams" as Want to Read: Want to Read saving… Want to Read. This text provides an analysis of phenomenological-existential theories, values, principles and concepts that have an influence on human behaviour, problems and experiences. Get A Copy. Kindle Store. Amazon.