The Existential Expression
of English and Italian

─The Derived Sentences
from the Small Clause Structure
and the Unaccusative Structure ─

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1. Introduction

In the case of expressing the notion "a thing exists in a place" (Existential Expression: EE) by using the verb *be*, there are two ways in English: predicational sentences that predicate a certain property in a referent presupposing the existence in a discourse, as in (1a), and presentational sentences that newly introduce a topic referent into a discourse, as in (1b).[1]

(1)　　a. The lamp was in the corner.

　　　　b. A lamp was in the corner.

In the *there-be* construction which places the expletive *there* at the subject position, a subject NP must convey new information, since the topic referent is newly introduced into discourse. For this reason, the anaphoric NP in presentational sentences is generally not allowed.

(2)　　There was a lamp in the corner.

　As Italian equivalents of the English verb *be*, there are predicational sentences, as in (3a) and presentational sentences, as in (3b) using the verb *essere*. Presentational sentences, such as (4) use the verb *esserci* with the presentational clitic *ci*.

(3)　　a. Il tuo amico　　è in casa.　(Salvi (1991b: 164))

　　　　(the) your friend is in house

　　　　b. Una lettera è nella busta.　(Burzio (1986: 128))

　　　　　a letter　　is in the envelop

(4)　　a. Ci sono　molti clienti nel negozio.　(Burzio (1986: 126))

　　　　　there are many clients in the store

　　　　b. Nella borsa c'è la mia lettera.

　　　　　in the bag　there is (the) my letter.

The verb *esserci* is used differently from the *there-be* construction in English, both in presentational sentences, as in (4a) and predicational sentence, as in (4b).

　In this paper, the derivative sentences of the EE in English and Italian are analyzed in terms of two different underlying structures in Italian: the small clause (sc) structure and the unaccusative structure. A close look at these underlying structures and each expletive (English *there* and Italian *ci*), reveals that EE's using the copular are syntactically derived from different

structures in both languages.

2. The Small Clause Structure and the Unaccusative Structure

Linking verbs such as the English *be* and Italian *essere* function as the connection between the subject and the predicate. Such a "subject-predicate" relationship is called a sc structure. As Burzio (1986: 151) mentioned, a sc will thus have a subject and a predicate ranging over past participles (PastP), present participles (PreP), adjective phrases (AP) and prepositional phrases (PP). The verb *essere* allows the predicate to enable the appearance of a NP, AP, PastP and PP.[2] The structure of the verb *essere* can be defined, as schematized in (5), as having a sc in the internal argument of a VP.

(5) $[_{VP} [_{V} \text{ essere}] [_{sc} \text{ X Y}]]$

Indefinite clauses (indefC) and definite clauses (defC) other than NP's appear in the subject position X, and NP's, AP's and PP's occur in the predicate position Y, as shown in (6).

(6) a. Maria è la ragazza più bella. (X:NP/ Y:NP)　(Salvi (1991b: 163))

　　　Maria is the most beautiful girl

　b. Andrea è in casa. (X:NP/ Y:PP)

　　　Andrea is in house

　c. Poter partire subito　　sarebbe　　magnifico. (X:indefC/ Y:AP)　(Salvi (1991b: 174))

　　　To be able to leave soon would be magnificent

　d. Che vengano anche loro è quasi sicuro. (X:defC/ Y:AP)　(Salvi (1991b: 174))

　　　that come also they　　is almost secure

The sc structure is characterized by the obligatory moving of an unaccusative subject NP.

(7) ?*È una lettera nella busta.　(Burzio (1986: 128))

　　　is a letter　　in the envelop

When the subject X in the sc is postponed by the verb, such as (7), the sentence is unacceptable. It is necessary to raise the subject, as in (3b) or move it after the sc. Admissible predicates in the sc differ by verb. Italian verbs which have a sc structure are as follows: *stare/ andare/ costare/ diventare/ divenire/ apparire/ cadere/ rimanere/ restare/ sembrare/ parere/ risultare/ appartenere/ farsi/ mettersi.* The verb *sembrare*, for example, enables the predicate in the sc to replace the NP, AP, PastP, PP, indefC and defC, and makes the subject NP move obligatorily before it.

(8) a. Gianni　　sembra amare　Maria.　(Graffi (1994: 156))

　　　Giovanni seems　to love Maria

　b. *Sembra Gianni　　amare　Maria.　(Graffi (1994: 156))

　　　seems　Giovanni　to love Maria

On the other hand, since the verb *esserci* allows only a PP as a predicate, the sentence (9a), in which the predicate is PastP, is unacceptable.[3]

(9)   a. *Ci   furono molte case   costruite.

      there were   many houses built

    b. Furono costruite molte case.

      were   built   many houses

In the case of the verb *essere*, the sentence (9b) in which the subject NP moves from the postverbal position is acceptable. However, the verb *esserci* cannot allow the appearance of a PastP within itself, as in (9a). Additionally, differently from the verb *essere*, the verb *esserci* doesn't allow the NP to raise and it is necessary to place the subject NP after it, as in (10a).[4]

(10) a. Ci sono   due ragazzi in cima.

      there are two boys   in top

    b. *Due ragazzi ci sono   in cima.   (Salvi (1991a: 111))

      two boys   there are in top

This subject NP placement phenomenon is similar to that of unaccusative verbs bearing no copulative.[5] Salvi (1991a: 47-55) points out that there are 4 characteristics for Italian unaccusative verbs: the auxiliary selection *essere*, *Ne*-cliticization, the adjective perfect participle, and the absolute participle construction. Among them, the verb *esserci* can select the auxiliary *essere* in complex tenses, as in (11) and *ne*-criticize,[6] as in (12).

(11) C'è   stato un terremoto   in Sicilia.

      there is been an earthquake in Sicily

(12) Ce   ne   sono molti nel negozio.   (Burzio (1986: 127))

      there of-them are   many in the store

Although the verb *esserci* is partially lacking for some unaccusative characteristics, it would be possible to conclude that it has an unaccusative structure which bears an accusative NP in the internal argument of a VP, as schematized in (13). This conclusion is based on the grounds that it allows the postposition of the subject NP and *ne*-cliticization.

(13) [[$_{VP}$ [$_V$ esserci] NP] [PP]]

Table 1   Characteristics of *essere* and *esserci* in EE

Verb	*essere*	*esserci*
discourse structure	presentational and predicational	presentational and predicational
underlying structure	small clause structure: [$_{VP}$ [$_V$ essere] [$_{SC}$ NP PP]]	unaccusative structure: [[$_{VP}$ [$_V$ esserci] NP] [PP]]
predicate	NP/AP/PastP/PP	PP/(AP)
ne-cliticization	△	○
essere as auxiliary	○	○
postposition of NP	×	○
adjective perfect participle	×	×
absolute participle	×	×
subject raising	○	×

In summary, the verbs *essere* and *esserci* can be integrated into Table 1. The EE using the verb *essere* is derived from the sc structure, which in the internal argument has the subject raising NP and the predicate of NP, AP, PastP, or PP, while that of *esserci* which has an unaccusative NP in the internal argument of VP, is derived from the unaccusative structure which has the locative PP in the external argument. The derivation from each underlying structure will be discussed in the following sections.

3. The Derivation of *essere* and *esserci*

Consider the derivation, taking (3a) as an EE by *essere*, as illustrated in (14).

(14) $[_{IP_1} [_{NP}$ Il tuo amico$]$ $[_{I'}$ I $[_{VP} [_{V'}$ è$]$ $[_{IP_2} [_{NP} t]$ $[_{PP}$ in casa$]]]]]$
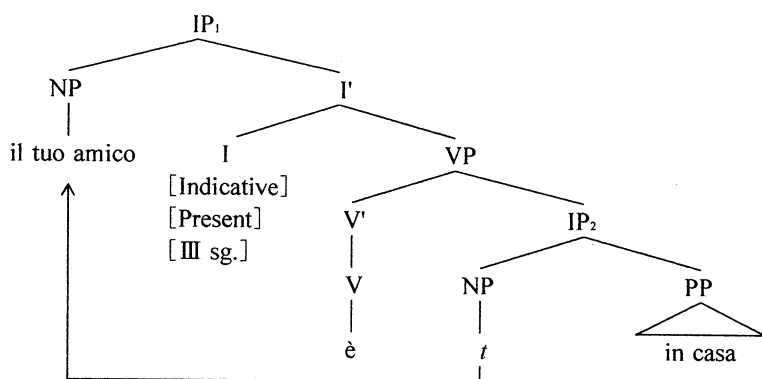
In the syntactic structure of (14), the NP *il tuo amico* is the subject in the sc of IP$_2$.[7] It is raised to the Spec of IP$_1$ and a Nominative Case is assigned. If the NP of IP$_2$ is definite and anaphoric, the sentence is predicational. In the case of indefinite and cataphoric NP's, it's presentational.

Consider the derivation, taking (4a) as an EE by *esserci* which bears an unaccusative structure, as illustrated in (15).

(15) $[_{IP} [_{NP}$ *pro*$]$ $[_{I'} [_{I}$ ci$]$ $[_{VP} [_{V'} [_{V}$ sono$]$ $[_{NP}$ molti clienti$]]$ $[_{PP}$ nel negozio$]]]]$
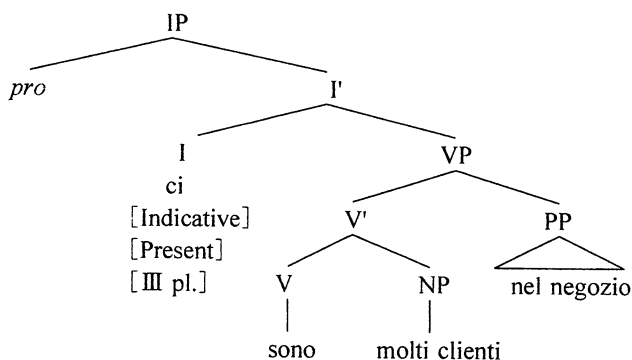
The empty category *pro* transmits the Nominative Case to the unaccusative NP (Graffi (1994: 237)). Hereby, Nominative Case is assigned to the unaccusative NP *molti clienti* in (15).

Furthermore, in the null-subject property which Italian has (Burzio (1986: 129)), there are INFL and two subject clitics (*si/ ci*) in the INFL (I) position. The empty category in the subject position is allowed when this is related not only to I, but also to other subject clitics. According to this property, it is possible to place *pro* in the Spec of the IP. However, the verb *esserci* cannot allow an unaccusative NP to move to the Spec of the IP, unlike other unaccusative verbs, as shown in (16).

(16) *[$_{IP}$ [$_{NP}$ molti clienti] [$_{I'}$ [$_I$ ci] [$_{VP}$ [$_{V'}$ [$_V$ sono] [$_{NP}$ *t*]] [$_{PP}$ nel negozio]]]]

Like *esserci*, the verb *volerci*[8] which has the clitic *ci* cannot allow the subject raising, as in (17).

(17) *Mille lire   ci   vogliono. (Salvi (1991: 111))

     a thousand lire there want

It would be related with the clitic *ci* that the unaccusative NP of *esserci* and *volerci* cannot be raised to the subject position. As Burzio (1986) points out, the subject clitic *ci* is placed in INFL together with the inflectional elements and specifies the empty category in the Spec of IP. It is considered that the clitic *ci* blocks the subject raising of an unaccusative NP.

Consider now, an alternation as in (18), which preposes the locative PP in the expression using the verb *esserci*.

(18) Nel negozio ci sono molti clienti.

The sentence (18) which preposes the topicalized PP *nel negozio* is derived, as illustrated in (19).

(19) [$_{CP}$ [$_{PP}$ nel negozio] [$_{C'}$ C [$_{IP}$ [$_{NP}$ *pro*] [$_{I'}$ [$_I$ ci] [$_{VP}$ [$_{V'}$ [$_V$ sono] [$_{NP}$ molti clienti]] [$_{PP}$ *t*]]]]]]
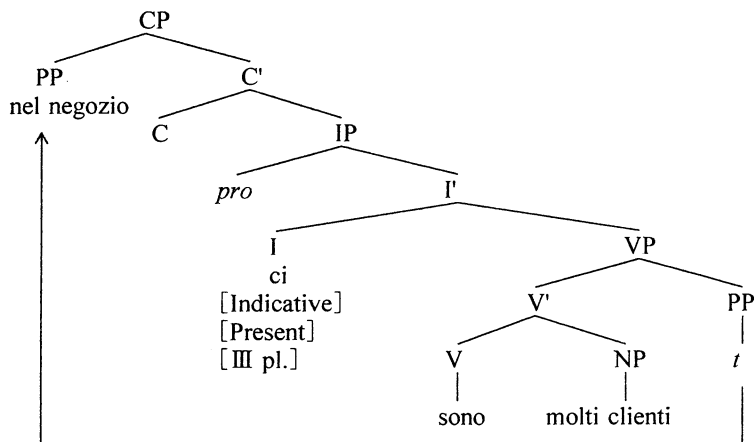
In the syntactic structure of (19), the locative PP in the VP moves to the Spec of CP. The locative PP in the external argument of the unaccusative verb *esserci* can freely appear in the sentence-initial position as topic topicalization by the leftward movements.

In summary, the verb *essere* has the sc structure as the underlying structure. In the derivation from the sc structure, the NP in a sc moves to the Spec of IP$_1$ in order to assign the Nominative

Case. On the other hand, the verb *esserci* has the unaccusative structure. In the unaccusative structure, the clitic *ci* is placed in the INFL with the inflectional elements, and the Nominative Case is assigned by checking ϕ-features transmitted from the INFL to the empty category *pro*.

4. The *there-be* Construction in English

In this section, it will be proposed that the *there-be* construction in English has the sc structure as the underlying structure, unlike the Italian verb *esserci*. It is obvious that the underlying structure of the verb *be* is the same sc structure as the Italian verb *essere*, as schematized in (20), so that NP, AP, PastP, PreP and PP can appear in the predicate.

(20) $[_{VP} [_V be] [_{SC} X Y]]$

Since the verb *be* has the sc structure, NP is raised to the subject position, as in (21a).

(21) a. Several houses were built.

      b. *Were several houses built.

    Here, we consider the presentational sentence of (22a) and a predicational sentence of (22b).

(22) a. A lamp was in the corner. (Bresnan (1994: 75))

      b. The lamp was in the corner.

The sentences (22) are derived by moving the NP in the sc to the Spec of IP_1 in the same way as the Italian verb *essere*, as illustrated in (23).

(23) $[_{IP1} [_{NP} a/the\ lamp] [_{I'} I [_{VP} [_{V'} is] [_{IP2} [_{NP} t] [_{PP} in\ the\ corner]]]]]$

    Since the *there-be* construction can place NP, AP, PastP, PreP and PP in the predicate position, it is considered to have the same sc structure as the verb *be*.[9] However, it doesn't allow subject raising, unlike the verb *be*, as in (24b).

(24) a. There's a woman in the house. (Rando & Napoli (1978: 300))

      b. *A woman there's in the house.

Additionally, if it has a PastP or a PreP in the sc as a predicate, a NP which is the subject in a sc, cannot move.

(25) a. There were several houses built. (Burzio (1986: 154))

      b. *There were built several houses.

(26) a. There was a girl singing. (Lumsden (1988: 50))

      b. *There was singing a girl.

Although *there be* has the sc structure, the impossibility of the NP movement is likely to relate to the occurrence of the expletive *there* in the subject position. The NP in a sc moves to the Spec of IP in order to assign the Nominative Case. However, in the *there-be* construction, *there* has already been there. Moreover, the subject NP in a sc of the *there-be* construction is influenced by definiteness restriction (Rando & Napoli (1978)).

(27) a. There was a man walking into the room. (Rochemont & Culicover (1990: 28))

      b. *There was the man walking into the room.

The sentence (27b) in which the definite NP *the man* appears in the subject NP, is unacceptable. Since the *there-be* construction has the structural necessity for satisfying the requirements of introducing a new topic in discourse (presentational sentences), the anaphoric definite NP cannot appear. Consider the derivation of the *there-be* construction in (28), which has different syntactic properties from the verb *be*, as illustrated in (29).

(28) There was a lamp in the corner.

(29) [$_{IP1}$ [$_{NP}$ there] [$_{I'}$ I [$_{VP}$ [$_{V'}$ was] [$_{IP2}$ [$_{NP}$ a lamp] [$_{PP}$ in the corner]]]]]
⟨φ⟩ ⟨φ⟩

In the syntactic structure of (29), *there* is inserted in the Spec of IP$_1$ for checking φ-features of numbers and persons in the INFL and those of the NP in the sc. Then the NP *a lamp* has a Nominative Case (Chomsky (2000)). Such *there-be* construction has presentational meaning.

Next, consider an alternation in (30) that preposes the locative PP.

(30) In the corner there was a lamp.

This alternation (30) is a topicalized sentence of the locative PP which frequently appears in the Italian verb *esserci*.

(31) [$_{CP}$ [$_{PP}$ in the corner] [$_{C'}$ C [$_{IP1}$ [$_{NP}$ there] [$_{I'}$ I [$_{VP}$ [$_{V'}$ [$_{V}$ was] [$_{IP2}$ [$_{NP}$ a lamp]] [$_{PP}$ *t*]]]]]]]

In the syntactic structure of (31), *there* is inserted in the Spec of IP$_1$, and then the locative PP moves to the Spec of CP. Sentences such as (30) display what is termed "locative inversion." The sentence in (32) shows a locative inversion construction which utilizes the verb *be* without the expletive *there*.[10]

(32) In the corner was a lamp. (Bresnan (1994: 75))

As is noted in Quirk et al. (1985: 1410), the absence of *there,* such as in (32) is preferred when the final NP is relatively concrete and specific and there is much less constraint upon indefiniteness. Conversely, the presence of *there* indicates that the sentence, such as in (30), is presentational.[11] Focusing on definiteness restriction, it is likely that the sentence (32) is derived from the verb *be* by inversion, and the sentence (30) is derived from *there be* construction which is influenced by it. Ooba and Shima (2002) point out that in the derivation of a locative inversion such as (32), the locative PP in the VP moves to the Spec of IP. However, from the standpoint of considering locative inversion as topicalization, the locative PP moves to the Spec of a CP, not to the Spec of an IP, which occupies the expletive *there* in the *there-be* construction. Because of this, in locative inversion using the verb *be*, the Spec of IP becomes empty. Thus, it is proposed that locative inversion without the expletive *there* such as (32), is derived by deleting it in the *there-be* construction if the NP is indefinite, as in illustrated in (33).

(33) [$_{CP}$ [$_{PP}$ in the corner] [$_{C'}$ C [$_{IP1}$ [$_{NP}$ ~~there~~] [$_{I'}$ I [$_{VP}$ [$_{V'}$ [$_{V}$ was] [$_{IP2}$ [$_{NP}$ a lamp]] [$_{PP}$ *t*]]]]]]]
⟨φ⟩ ⟨φ⟩

In the syntactic structure of (33), the expletive *there* is inserted to the Spec of IP$_1$, the locative

PP moves to the Spec of the CP, and then *there* is deleted. In Such locative inversion construction, a preposed PP becomes a topic as a referent. Thus, when a sentence has less presentational meaning such as in (34), it is slightly unacceptable.

(34) ?At the door is the boy.

However, a sentence which has specificational meaning is acceptable, as in (35b), although the Case of the NP is accusative, not nominative.

(35) a. ?*In the garden am I.

      b. In the garden is me. (Green (1985: 140))

Differing from the case that a NP is indefinite and the sentence is presentational, the subject isn't the NP of the sentence in (35b), but the locative PP. Thus, it is likely that the sentence (35b) is derived by moving the locative PP to the Spec of IP, not to the Spec of CP, and it plays a part in subject syntactic functions.

In summary, the EE using the verb *be* and *there be* are both derived from the sc structure. Although *be* and *there be* are derived from the same underlying structure, the *there-be* construction, however, has different syntactic characteristics from the verb *be* because of the existence of the expletive *there* which is syntactically inserted. In topicalization preposing the locative PP and using the indefinite NP such as in (32), the expletive *there* is inserted, the locative PP moves forward, and *there* is selectively deleted. Therefore, the subject NP is influenced by definiteness restriction and the derived sentence is presentational.

5. Conclusion

As argued so far, the EE of English and Italian is examined through derivation and alternatives[12] derived from the underlying structure. When comparing the English verb *there be* and the Italian *esserci*, the following can be pointed out.

A. As the underlying structure, the English verb *there be* has the sc structure, while the Italian verb *esserci* has the unaccusative structure.

Like the verb *be*, the underlying structure of *there be* is the sc structure, as schematized in (36).

(36) [$_{VP}$ [$_v$ be] [$_{sc}$ NP PP]]

The expletive *there* doesn't appear in the underlying structure since it is inserted during certain phases of derivation. Topicalization, which preposes the locative PP, appears less frequently since it is within the sc. On the other hand, since the underlying structure of the Italian *esserci* is unaccusative, and the locative PP is in the external argument of the VP, topicalization freely appears. Since it is more natural to place the locative PP, which is a topic element, initially in the sentence, presentational sentences using *esserci* prefer the locative PP topicalization.

B. The English *there be* is influenced by definiteness restriction, while the Italian *esserci* isn't. The English expletive *there* functionally presents "presentation" and the *there-be* construction produces presentational sentences which need an indefinite NP as the subject NP. On the other hand, the Italian expletive *ci*, in the case of meaning "presentation" like the English *there*,

produces presentational sentences, while at the same time possibly producing predicational sentences, as in the case of using a set of verb *esserci*. Because of this, *esserci* isn't influenced by definiteness restriction.

C. Neither the English verb *there be* nor the Italian *esserci* allow the subject raising.

However, the reasons differ depending on the language. In both languages, the expletive is placed at the Spec of the IP, but in English, the expletive *there* is inserted during certain phases of derivation, while the Italian expletive *ci* is placed there by the movement.

Hence, it is concluded that the difference of the syntactic behavior between the English verb *there be* and the Italian *esserci* is due to the underlying structure and expletive which each language has.

Notes

* I am grateful to Lynn Anne Cooper for stylistic improvements. All remaining errors are my own.

1) In the presentational sentence (1b), the subject with the highest stress indicates discourse-new information.

2) Italian PreP's have the same function as adjectives and had lost a verbal function as the progressive aspect.

3) The verb *esserci* can partially allow AP to act as a predicate.
   (i) C'era   Giovanni ammalto. (Burzio (1986: 176))
       there was Giovanni sick

4) If the verb *esserci* has the same meaning as "existence" as in the verb *esistere* and produces predicational sentences, a raised NP is allowed.
   (i) Dio c'è. (Salvi (1991a: 113))
       God exists

Moreover, the sentence (10b) is acceptable with NP topicalization, if the NP is stressed with a "pause" after it.

5) It is generally possible for unaccusative verbs to place the NP at the sentence-initial position. The verb *esserci* is different from other unaccusative verbs in this point.

6) In the case of the verb *essere* forming predicational sentences in the high style, the genitive *ne* can be pronominalized for a NP introduced by *di*.
   (i) Piero ne   è il migliore amico. (Salvi (1991b: 168))
       Piero of-them is   the best friend

7) In this paper, the sc is considered to be equal to the IP.

8) The verb *volerci* also can *ne*-cliticize.
   (i) Ce   ne   vogliono altri. (Burzio (1986: 127))
       there of-them want   others

9) If a predicate in the sc of the verb *be* is empty, it is necessary to use the expletive *there*.
   (i) There are rabbits. (Lumsden (1988: 3))
   (ii) *Rabbits are.

In contrast to the verb *be*, *there be* has a flexible sc structure, since it can be derived without forming the sc.

10) Emonds (1976) calls the construction preposing the PP or AP "preposing around *be*."

11) In regards to the meaning, they point out that the verb *be* in (30) tends to connote *"chance to"* and *"happen to,"* while the NP in (32) tends to connote *"a certain."*

12) There is another alternative, "There was at the door a boy," which is derived by moving the NP in the sc rightward.

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