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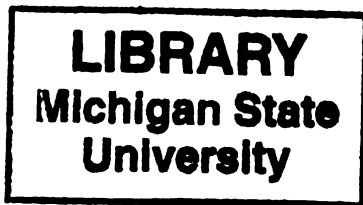
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A Unified Analysis of Negative Inversion sentences in African American English

By

Walter Lee Sistrunk Jr.

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

A UNIFIED ANALYSIS OF NEGATIVE INVERSION CONSTRUCTIONS IN AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH

By

Walter Lee Sistrunk Jr.

This thesis provides a unified analysis of Negative Inversion (NI) constructions in African American English. Earlier analyses done by Labov (1972) Sells, Rickford, and Wasom, (1996), and Weldon (1997) argue that two analyses are needed because expletive subjects are not allowed in sentences containing a modal auxiliary. It is shown that all NI sentences must adhere to the definiteness restriction, and therefore, the subjects must be VP-internal in all NI sentences. Lasnik's (1995) argument is utilized to show that Negative Inversion sentences are like the existential sentences of Standard English in that both the expletive subject and its associate need to be assigned Case independently. I argue that expletives cannot appear in certain Negative Inversion sentences in African American English because of Case requirements. Modal auxiliaries, unlike the copula verb **be** cannot assign partitive Case. In these cases, the associate must raise at Lf to be assigned Case, and the expletive cannot appear. This allows all NI constructions to be given a unified analysis which does not involve inversion at all.

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INTRODUCTION

Negative Inversion (NI) constructions in African American English (AAE) have been studied by linguists for over thirty years. NI sentences are double negative constructions having an initial negative auxiliary followed by a negative indefinite subject. Though these constructions look like interrogatives with an inverted auxiliary, they are declarative sentences spoken with a rising intonation instead of the falling intonation that is typical of interrogative sentences. They can have either a form of the verb **be** or a modal verb as the initial auxiliary as shown below.

(1)

- a. Ain't nobody in their right mind leavin' out in this bad weather
- b. Won't nobody go to the party tonight.

In this thesis, I will provide a unified analysis of both kinds of sentences. In chapter one, I will provide an overview of the literature on Negative Inversion in African American English. This overview will summarize several competing theories which fall into two camps. The first camp argues that two analyses are needed; one to account for the NI construction with a modal auxiliary and a different one with the verb **be** being existential. They argue that two structurally different negative expressions can be formed depending on what type of auxiliary appears initially. Thus, negative constructions that use existential auxiliaries are given an existential analysis, while on the other hand, negative constructions that use a modal auxiliary are given an inversion analysis.

The argument for two analyses is based on the premise that in sentences where the negative auxiliary is a form of the verb **be**, the expletive **there** can appear grammatically, and an existential analysis is given. On the contrary, in a sentence having a modal as its

negative auxiliary, if the expletive appears the sentence is ungrammatical. Therefore, sentences with modal auxiliary are given an inversion analysis.

The second camp argues that there is only one analysis needed to account for the negative inversion construction. This argument is based on the fact that both the NI construction made with the existential auxiliary and the modal auxiliary place special conditions on its subject. Like existential sentences, this condition requires subject to be indefinite. This condition is called the definiteness restriction.

In chapter 2, I will give a criticism of each analysis by first showing that the definiteness restriction is not accounted for by those who argue for two analyses are needed. At the same time, I will show that those who argue for a single existential analysis cannot account for why an overt expletive cannot appear in NI sentences that have modal auxiliaries.

In chapter 3, I will argue that all NI constructions can be accounted for under an existential analysis. An existential analysis will account for why the definiteness effect is required of the post auxiliary subject. I will then use Cas theory to explain why the expletive must not appear in sentences containing modal auxiliaries.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Labov's analysis of Negative Inversion

Labov (1972) gives one of the earliest analyses of Negative Inversion (NI) constructions. In this analysis, he states that negative inversion is a device which is used as an option to add emphasis to negative sentences with indeterminate subjects. The negative feature is placed on the auxiliary through the process of negative transfer. The negative feature is transferred from the subject onto the verb. After negative transfer has taken place the auxiliary verb undergoes the process of inversion.

(2)

- a. Nobody will catch us→
- b. Nobody won't catch us→
- c. Won't nobody catch us→

(Labov 1972, pg. 811)

Labov states that the process of inversion is a component of negative attraction involving the attraction of the negative features which transform the indeterminate **any**, **ever**, and **either** into their negative alternates **no**, **never** and **neither**. The conditions for negative attraction require that the negative feature attach to the first indeterminate; this attachment is obligatory if the subject is an indeterminate. Labov illustrates how negative attraction is optional, but obligatory when an indeterminate subject is present. When the indeterminate subject is skipped, the sentence is ungrammatical.

(3)

- a. * He didn't know anything about anybody. (AAE)
- b. * He ever know nothing about anybody. (AAE)
- c. * He knew nothing about anybody. (AAE)
- d. * He knew anything about nobody. (AAE)

(Labov 1972, pg. 776)

In (3a), the auxiliary contains the negative feature but the indeterminate subject does not. Here, the negative feature is not transferred from auxiliary to the indeterminate subject. To account for (3b)'s ungrammaticality, the indeterminate **ever**, being the first indeterminate lacks the negative feature, therefore, the negative feature cannot be assigned to the indeterminate subject. In (3c), which minimally contrasts with (3b), the object is not assigned the negative feature is not satisfying the negative transfer rule. In (3d), the first indeterminate is skipped and is not assigned the negative feature, which violates negative transfer.

Labov (1972) contends that within the NI construction there are two sentence structures: the null expletive structure and the negative inversion structure. Sentences that begin with a negative auxiliary having some form of the copula-**be** are analyzed as existential constructions containing a null expletive **there**. On other hand, sentences that do not begin with a copula-**be** auxiliary do not contain null expletives and are analyzed as inversion constructions.

(4)

- a. Ain't nobody in the room. (existential)
- b. Ain't nothing going on here.
- c. Won't nobody stop us. (inversion)
- d. Can't nobody do that there.

Labov illustrates that adding an expletive to a NI construction will produce either a grammatical or an ungrammatical sentence. In sentences where the expletive forms a grammatical construction, the sentence is an existential construction. Conversely, when adding an overt expletive forms an ungrammatical construction, the sentence is an inversion construction. This is shown in (5).

(5)

- a. There/it ain't nobody in the room.
- b. * There/it won't nobody stop us.

Labov argues that the inversion sentence is derived by a movement operation called negative inversion (NI). The movement operation of NI involves the movement of the negative auxiliary verb from the right of the subject to the left of the subject. Labov argues that this movement operation is similar to the movement operation that occurs in Fronted Negative Sentences in Standard English (SE) as shown in (7b).

(6)

- a. Nobody can't stop us.
- b. Can't nobody stop us.

(7)

- a. John will never again agree to go on a blind date.
- b. Never again will John agree to go on a blind date.

The examples above illustrate Labov's argument: the auxiliary in (6a) and (7a) start on the right of the subject. In (6b) and (7b) the auxiliary (along with or as a result of the movement of the negative item) moves to the left of the subject. In SE, a negative Adverbial must precede the fronted auxiliary.

In summary, Labov states that NI sentence constructions have two structures, the existential type and the inversion type. The latter sentence type, which contain modal auxiliaries like **won't**, are said to have derived from an underlying sentence where the verb has moved from the position where it originated, that being to the right of the subject. Conversely, Labov holds that in sentence where the negative auxiliary is in some form of the copula **be** such as **ain't**, there is a possibility that these sentences are existential sentences with a deleted expletive.

1.2 Martin's analysis of negative inversion sentences

Martin (1992) presents an argument that NI constructions are not inversion constructions. In comparison to Labov's earlier analysis of Negative Inversion sentences, Martin's use of syntactic theory gives these sentences an entirely new structure. Martin's analysis argues, that the so called Negative Inversion construction in African American English (AAE) is existential. However, unlike Labov, Martin argues that NI constructions have only one structure and not two. Below, I will outline Martin's two key arguments that NI sentences are existential and not inversion constructions. Last, I will give several hypotheses which Martin (1993) discusses in a later paper on why the expletive subject deletes in AAE.

Martin's argument that NI sentences are not inversion constructions is based on the following data:

(8)

- a. John ain't believe mary liked no one (AAE)
- b. * Why ain't John believe Mary liked no one. (AAE)
- c. Ain't many doctors roun' here (that) know (nothin'/one iota) 'bout acupuncture.

In (8a), Martin shows that a negative polarity item (NPI) can be licensed in an embedded clause. However, in (8b), where wh-inversion occurs, licensing of the embedded NPI is blocked. In NI involves inversion, then an NPI occurring in a NI sentence should not be licensed. Nonetheless, (8c) shows that NPIs are allowed in NI sentences this leads Martin to conclude that NI sentences are not inversion constructions. Below, I will lay out the details of this argument.

Martin discusses the syntactic structure of simple and pleonastic negative sentences. Simple negation has one overt or 'inherently' negative element such as **nobody** or **doubt** which forms the negative sentence structure of standard English. In nonstandard English, pleonastic negative sentences contain several negative elements within a single sentence, where one true negative element, or "true Neg", controls all the other negative elements occurring in the sentence. Martin argues that the grammars of Standard English (SE) and nonstandard English differ minimally and are interpretable to all speakers of English because they use the same phrase marker which makes the general interpretation of negative sentences possible (pg. 26).

Martin uses Klima's (1966) transformational analysis to identify the "true" negative element in pleonastic sentences. Klima's analysis has the negative feature as the daughter of S(entence), where it triggers lexical transformations changing what he calls the

indeterminate word class into the indefinite word class. In the example below, the indeterminate **some** is transformed into the indefinite **any** (Taken from Martin 1992: 35).

(9)

- a. Neg John has some money →
Neg John has any money →
- b. Neg John ate some ketchup too →
Neg John ate any ketchup either →

Kilma's rule identifies the potential attachment sites of the Negative feature where "Neg" attaches to the first indefinite in the sentence appearing before the modal or the auxiliary. When an indefinite NP does not appear before a modal or auxiliary, the negative feature may attach to the modal, or auxiliary, then continue on to the first indefinite NP in VP. Martin argues that the negative feature is on Infl. He illustrates this by showing that when negative polarity items (NPIs) appear in embedded clauses that are not negated, the sentence is ungrammatical. In examples (10a - f), the matrix clause is not negated and the embedded NPIs form ungrammatical constructions. The reason for this ungrammaticality is due to the fact that the sentence lacks "true" Neg.

(10)

- a. Patty said that Bill has (* any) money.
- b. Who did Patty say has (* any) money?
- c. Why did Patty say that Bill has (* any) money?

nonstandard English

- d. Patty say that Bill got (* any/* no) money?
- e. Who Patty say got (* any/* no) money?
- f. Why Patty say Bill got (* any/* no) money?

In the second example set (11a-f), the embedded clause is affirmative and the matrix clause is negative. In this set, the embedded NPIs are possible.

(11)

- a. Patty didn't say that Bill has any money.

Nonstandard English

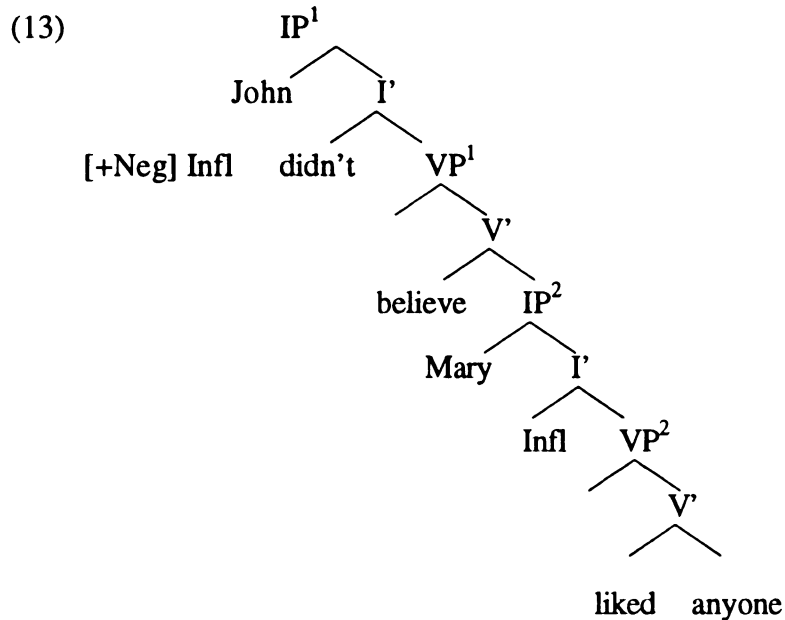
- b. Patty ain't say Bill got (no) money.

Martin argues that Infl, where the negative feature has attached itself, is able to license embedded NPIs because of its ability to govern the functional category that the NPI is in. When embedded NPIs are not in the scope of the Infl containing the negative feature, the negative feature cannot be assigned. As a result, the sentence is ungrammatical because Infl fails to license the embedded NPI. Martin argues that embedded NPIs are licensed under the following conditions:

(12)

- a. A [+Neg] Infl licenses NPIs within a maximal functional category iff (if and only if) it governs that category.
- b. A functional head X^0 governs a functional category $\{YP/Y'\}$ iff X^0 m-commands YP, and YP m-commands X^0 .
- c. X m-commands Y iff the first maximal projection dominating X dominates Y and there is no ZP such that ZP dominates Y and ZP does not dominate X.
- d. m-command is relative to the type of phrase (i.e. X,Y, Z in (c) must be all lexical or all functional).

In order for the embedded NPI to be negatively licensed by Infl, Infl (the head X^0) must govern the functional category (IP) which governs the embedded NPI. In (12), (a) and (b) requires that Infl and the embedded IP have a relationship of mutual m-command. Martin's notion of government specifies that the governing relations of functional categories and lexical categories be treated differently. This means that intervening lexical categories such as VP are transparent and do not affect the governing domain of functional categories such as IP and CP. This enables functional categories to form mutually m-command relationships with other functional categories; a condition that allows the Infl (head X^0) to license the embedded IP (YP, Y') which assigns the negative feature to the NPI through government as shown below.



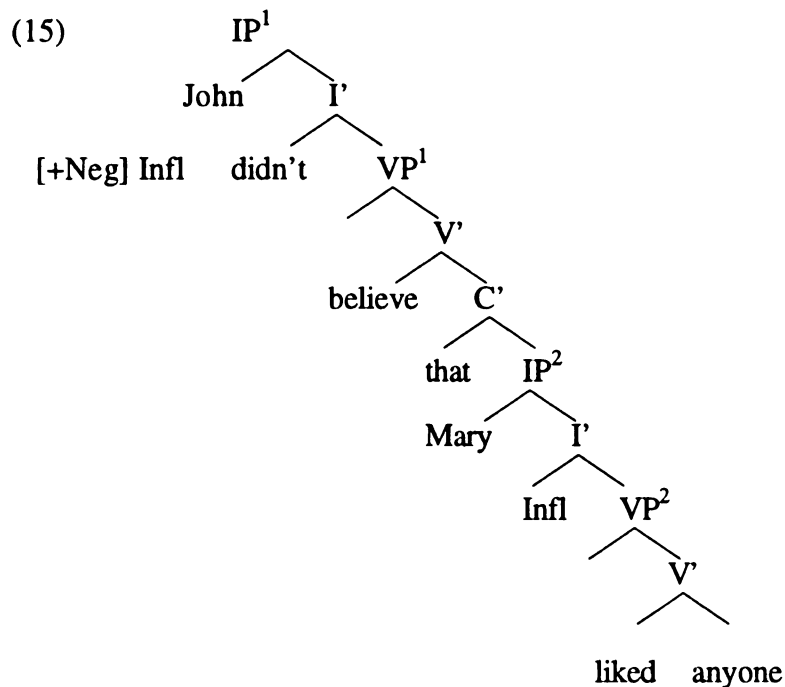
In (13), [+neg] Infl governs the IP² because it meets the conditions of m-command. Since VP¹, being a lexical category, is invisible the maximal functional projection that dominates IP² is IP¹ (the matrix IP). Given the fact that IP¹ dominates both Infl and IP², Infl and IP² are in a relation of mutual m-command. With the conditions of m-command being met, Infl can govern into the category that the NPI is in, thus, licensing it by assigning to it its negative feature through government. This predicts the grammaticality of the sentences in (14).

(14)

- a. John didn't believe Mary liked anyone.
- b. John couldn't stand the fact that Susan showed no pity.
- c. John didn't believe that Mary liked anyone.

Martin assumes when **that** appears that there is only an intermediate projection C' and not an entire functional projection. With the complementizer phrase only projecting to C', Martin argues that C' does not block Infl from governing IP², whereas, the category

CP would. In other words, Martin is stating that when **that** appears it does not form a full category and cannot form m-command relation with IP² as shown in (15).



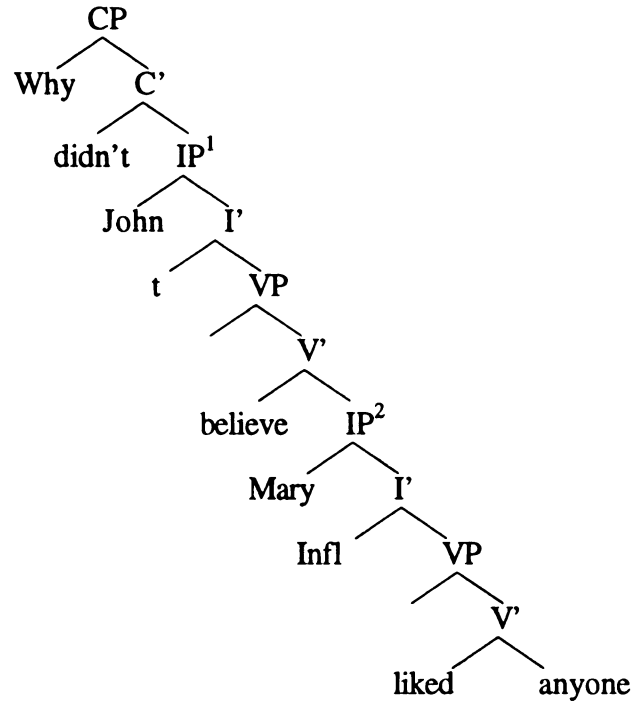
However, in instances where Infl undergoes inversion in Wh movement constructions, the embedded NPI is ungrammatical as shown in (16).

(16)

- a. * Why didn't John believe Mary liked anyone.
- b. * Why couldn't John stand the fact that Susan showed no pity.
- c. * Why didn't John believe that Mary liked anyone.

Martin argues that since Infl has moved from the only position where it forms a mutually m-command relationship with the embedded IP, Infl no longer governs the embedded IP and therefore cannot license the NPI that it contains as shown in (17).

(17)



In (17), Infl begins in IP¹ where it can govern both the matrix clause and the embedded clause. Movement to Infl is triggered by the *wh* item. Subject Auxiliary inversion occurs moving Infl over the subject to C⁰. Martin argues that the governing relationship between the [+Neg] Infl and the embedded NPI is affected by Subject Auxiliary Inversion (SAI). In (17), the maximal functional projection that dominates IP² is still IP¹. However, with Infl in C, the first maximal functional projection that dominates Infl is CP. Infl and IP² do not mutually m-command each other because the node that dominates IP² is not the same node that dominates Infl. As a result, Infl does not govern IP² and the NPI does not receive its negative licensing.

Therefore, the examples in (18) are ruled out because there is no “true Neg” in the embedded sentence to assign the NPI its negative feature.

(18)

- a. Who didn't t_i [_{IP} Patty t say [_{CP} has (* any) money?]] (SE)
- b. Who ain't t_i [_{IP} Patty t say [_{CP} got (*no) money?]] (AAE)

(Martin 1992 p. 59 ex. 16)

- c. Who didn't t_i [_{IP} John t ask [_{IP} to give (a/* any) present to Walter]]
- d. Who ain't t_i [_{IP} John t ask [_{IP} (to) give {a/* no} present to Walter]]

(Martin 1992 p. 50 ex. 20)

The above licensing condition predicts that since Infl has raised above the subject, as in *wh* movement operations, it is not in the position to license the embedded NPI. Now we can see how this fact can be used to show that NI constructions do not involve inversion. In negative inversion sentences in AAE, Martin's licensing condition predicts that the embedded NPIs should be ungrammatical. The reason for this is simple: if negative inversion involves movement of Infl then the IP containing the embedded NPI will no longer m-command the moved Infl, just as in the *wh*-questions shown above. However, NPIs are grammatical in AAE NI constructions. This is shown in (19).

(19)

- a. Ain't many doctors roun' here (that) know (nothin/ one iota) bout acupuncture.
- b. Don't nobody say that dealers sellin' drug in the school yard {no more/anymore}.

(Martin 1992 p. 64 ex. 29)

For this reason, Martin concludes that NI sentences do not involve inversion. Instead, he argues that in NI sentences, the auxiliary remains in IP₁ where it can govern both the matrix clause and the embedded clause IP₂. In NI sentences, since Infl remains in IP₁ where it can govern IP₂, it can license the NPI in IP₂. Martin concludes that NI

constructions are the counterparts of Standard English existential sentences which have the expletive subject **there**.

Further, Martin shows that NI constructions, like existential constructions, must adhere to the definiteness restriction. This condition specifies that the post auxiliary subject must be an indefinite NP. When the post auxiliary subject is not an indefinite NP, the sentence is ungrammatical.

(20)

- a. There isn't a man in the bank. (SE)
- b. Ain't no man in the bank. (AAE)
- c. Won't nobody stay in the bank. (AAE)
- d. * There isn't the man in the bank. (SE)
- e. * Ain't the person in the bank. (the person in not in the bank.)
- f. * Won't John stay in the bank. (John won't stay in the bank.)

The definiteness condition is a defining characteristic of existential sentences according to Milsark (1972). Martin concludes from his analysis that Negative Inversion sentences are not verb raising structures. Instead, he argues that these sentences are negative existential sentences where the matrix Infl remains in place and retains the NPI licensing condition described above. In nonstandard English, Martin argues that the pleonastic subject is deleted by a PF rule which deletes the unstressed expletive subject.

In a later paper, Martin (1993) explores three possibilities as to why these negative existential sentences have a missing **there** expletive, and states the shortcomings of each. His first hypothesis assumes that **there** is a "null, non-theta NP" that is generated in the Spec position of IP. **There** then lowers at LF to VP where it adjoins to the left of the indefinite subject. By lowering to the subject, the null NP acts like the overt **there**.

However, Martin notes that his research suggests that there are several phonetically null elements which have grammatical and semantic functions. Martin points out that uncertainties arise with this analysis when trying to define a principle for ruling out the non-negative declarative reading shown in (21a). The Null NP hypothesis predicts that, (21a) and (21b) would have the same meaning, but in fact, (21a) can only be interpreted as a question.

(21)

- a. Is someone in the room.
- b. (There) is someone in the room. (Null expletive hypothesis)

Martin's second hypothesis assumes that the expletive **there** is generated in all existential sentences and is able to delete at PF under head government.¹ This analysis assumes that the auxiliary verb raises to C and head governs the expletive. Under this analysis, the expletive is present at both SS and LF and functions just like overt **there**. Martin notes that this analysis is problematic in that no explanation can be offered to explain why **there** is not able to delete in question sentences with SAI that are existential as shown in the contrast in (22).

(22)

- a. There ain't no flowers to put on the table.
- b. Ain't there no flowers to put on the table?
- c. * Why ain't e no flowers to put on the table?
- d. * Ain't e no flowers to put on the table?

¹ Head government is defined as follows: X^0 governs YP iff
 (i) X is sister to YP or
 (ii) YP is immediately dominated by ZP and X is sister to ZP.

Martin's third hypothesis involves expletive deletion with no inversion. This analysis assumes that the movement operation of inversion does not take place and that the expletive subject deletes.²

In this analysis, sentences with an overt **there** and a covert **there** are identical in structure. Another problem that Martin notes is that there is no way of limiting the deletion of **there**. Finally, there is nothing to explain why **there** is not deleted in affirmative sentences.

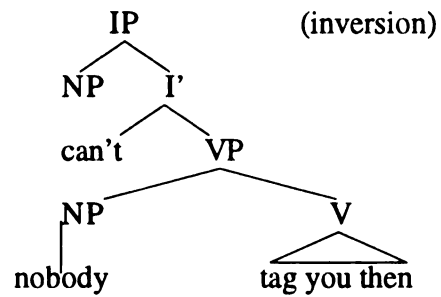
Unlike Labov, who states that there are two structures, the fronted negative construction and the existential construction, Martin argues despite these problems that NI constructions have only a single structure, namely existential.

1.3 An optimality account of NI

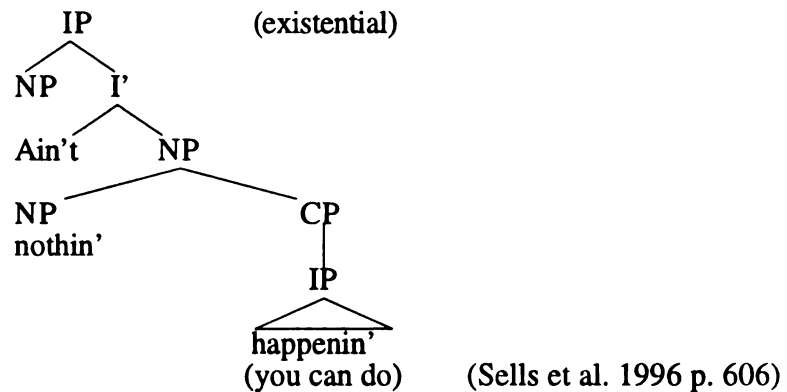
The most recent analysis of NI constructions is Sells, Rickford and Wasow (1996) (hereafter Sells et al.). Like Labov, Sells et al. argue that NI constructions must have two analyses to account for sentences having either the copula-**be** auxiliary or a modal auxiliary. Sells et al. argue, following Labov, that NI sentences with the copula-**be** auxiliary are existential. However, they conclude that NI sentences are not inversion constructions but are non-movement constructions. Sells et al.'s analysis proposes that the following structures (23) and (24) correspond to Labov's existential sentences and inversion sentences respectively.

² In English, sentences are required to have an overt subject in every clause. This requirement is called the Extended Projection Principle.

(23)



(24)



Instead of an inversion construction, Sells et al. conclude that the subject remains internal to VP and does not raise to the clausal subject position, [Spec, IP], as shown above in (23). Here Labov's inversion construction structure is replaced by the internal subject analysis.

Sells et al. show that NI sentences with modal auxiliaries do not raise from I to C. They illustrate this by showing that the complementizer, **that**, and the negative auxiliary appear simultaneously in embedded clauses.

(25)

- a. Bill said that ain't nobody in the room.
- b. Bill said that can't nobody leave.

Under inversion, we expect the modal auxiliary to move to C. However, when **that** appears in an embedded clause, C is filled. With C being filled by **that**, the auxiliary, which is to the right of **that**, has not risen to C. Thus, inversion is ruled out. As a result, Sells et al. argue that neither the existential nor the “NI construction” involves movement. In addition, Sells et al. state that neither the existential structure nor the inversion structure has anything generated in the canonical subject position. To account for this fact, a theory of optimality places constraints on the expression of negation in addition to other constraints which allow NI expressions to exist (Sells et al., 1996:596).

In Optimality Theory, constraints are ranked, which allows the lowest ranking of two constraints to be violated if the higher ranking constraint is satisfied. Sells et al. propose the following two constraints to account for NI constructions.

(26)

- (I) Negative quantifiers in AAVE must be c-commanded by a negative auxiliary,
- (II) Spec IP must be filled.

Ranking constraint (I) over constraint (II), allows the canonical subject position [spec, IP] to be unfilled thus accounting for both the Internal Subject and existential analysis .

The first constraint, (I), requires that the post auxiliary subject be c-commanded by a negative auxiliary. The condition of c-command restricts the post auxiliary subject from moving to the left of the negative auxiliary. In (27 b and c), the sentences are ungrammatical because the subject c-commands the negative auxiliary, and violates constraint (I).

(27)

- a. Can't nobody afford these high prices. (AAE)
- b. * Nobody can't afford these high prices.
- c. * Nobody ain't in the room.

The second constraint, constraint (II), requires that the canonical subject position, [Spec, IP] be filled. This constraint will force Spec IP to be filled in affirmative sentences such as (28a and b) and rules out (28c and d) because constraint (I) is not applicable, and constraint (ii) therefore cannot be violated.

(28)

- a. There's a man in the room.
- b. Somebody can leave now.
- c. * Is a man in the room.
- d. * Can somebody leave now.

For example, in sentence (29) below, Sells' et al.'s analysis argues that the negative auxiliary is in the head of IP which meets the conditions of constraint (I) but violates (II). This sentence is grammatical in that the primary constraint, (I) has been met. Though the Spec position of IP is unfilled, the post auxiliary subject is c-commanded by the negative auxiliary positioned in [IP]. In (30), the same holds true. The post auxiliary subject is c-commanded by the negative auxiliary in IP.

(29) [IP Spec [can't [VP nobody tag you then]]]

(30) [IP (there) [ain't [VP nothin' went down]]]

Sells et al. provides further evidence to show that certain negative inversion constructions cannot take on expletives and thus are analyzed as non-existential. Examples (31a and b) are ungrammatical when the expletive is added as (31c, d) shows. On the other hand, in (32), the sentences remain grammatical with the expletive present. Sells et al. give these sentences an existential analysis.

(31)

a. Can't nobody tag you then

b. Don't nobody see it.

c. * It can't nobody tag you.

d. * It don't nobody see it.

(32)

a. (There) Ain't nothing' happen'

b. (There) ain't nobody goin' out town.

c. (It) ain't nothin' worth cryin' about.

d. (There) ain't no stop sign here.

Although Sells et al. have established that NI sentences are not inversion constructions, their hypothesis maintains that there are two analyses of NI. For both analyses, the negative auxiliary is in the head of IP. However, in the non-existential construction, the post auxiliary subject is in VP, while in the existential constructions, the post auxiliary subject is an NP with a reduced relative clause.

(33)

- a. Ain't nothin' went down.
- b. **There** ain't nothin' **that** went down.
- c. Ain't nobody ever thought 'bout picking up nothin'.
- d. **There** ain't nobody **that** ever thought 'bout picking up nothin'.

The two analyses differ according to whether the sentence is a monoclausal structure (where the predicate is the main clause), or whether the predicate is in a reduced relative clause, a biclausal structure. Sells et al. state that existential constructions are biclausal structure and that inversion constructions are monoclausal. Sells et al. along with Labov et al. (1968), argue that sentences such as (33) are biclausal constructions. In (33a), **nothin' went down** is treated as a relative clause where the relative pronoun **that** has been deleted. Sells et al. argue that the existential analysis contains two separate clauses where the relative pronoun is deleted. Further, in (34), Sells et al. gives examples from Guy and Bayley (1995) which show that deletion of relative pronouns does occur in other instances in AAE.

(34)

- a. Miss Rushkin the one $\emptyset$ help me get into this program.
- b. What's the worst thing $\emptyset$ can happen?
- c. I don't know what the old woman's name $\emptyset$ that done the, the cooking.

(Sells et al. 1996, p.602)

Also, there are other examples which show that the post auxiliary is not the underlying subject (Sells et al. 1996, p. 603). In these sentences, the underlying subject appears to be in another clause.

(35)

- a. Ain't nothin' you can do for 'em.
- b. Ain't no way in the world you can miss it.

In conclusion, Sells et al. state that neither the inversion nor the existential sentence structure involves Auxiliary movement. Their analysis states that NI sentences with negative existential verbs are existential constructions with null expletives. These sentences are biclausal. Their second analysis states that non-existential sentences are formed with negative modal auxiliaries. This structure allows the subject to remain internal to VP.

1.4 Weldon's account of NI sentences

Weldon (1996) argues that two analyses are needed to explain Negative Inversion sentence structures in African American English as well. She holds that in order to account for NI sentences, the inversion and the existential analyses originally proposed by Labov must be maintained. Second, Weldon convincingly argues that NI constructions do not contain a reduced relative clause as Sells et al.'s (1996) existential analyses proposes. By demonstrating that NI sentences are monoclausal and not biclausal, she concludes that the relative pronoun **that** is not deleted. Furthermore, she shows that the relative pronoun never appears in NI sentences. For these reasons, Weldon argues that NI sentences are inversion constructions. She also shows that covert expletives are ungrammatical in certain NI constructions containing copula **be**. In these cases, Weldon builds onto her argument that an inversion analysis should be maintained.

1.4.1 Existential Quantifiers

In NI sentences, Weldon argues that the post auxiliary subject is not affected by negative attraction. Thus, in the event where an indefinite like **a man** is transformed into a negative polarity item such as **no man**, she holds that the subject remains positive. She

argues that under the Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar Theory (HPSG)³, the auxiliary selects an NP which only appears to be a negative existential quantifier (NPI). She argues that it is due to negative attraction and/or the fact the subject is c-commanded by the negative auxiliary, that the subject appears to be an NPI. From this, she holds that NI's post auxiliary subject maintains its positive attributes. Weldon's re-analysis of the post auxiliary subject is based on a phenomenon occurring between the negative quantifier **few** and the positive quantifier **many**. She predicts that negative concord (or negative attraction) changes a positive indefinite into the NPI **few** making the post auxiliary subject a negative quantifier. Weldon's conclusion suggests that the negative concord rule rejects the negative quantifier, **few**, for its positive counterpart **many**. As a result she argues that the negative quantifier in NI sentences are really a positive existential quantifier.

(36) * Don't few people live around here.

(37) Don't many people live around here.

Weldon's argument that negative quantifiers remain positive is based on the ungrammaticality that occurs with **few**. In (36), the quantifier "few people," does not appear grammatically in NI constructions while the positive quantifier auxiliary, "many people," does. Weldon predicts that the existential quantifier, **few**, being negative, should behave as other negative existential quantifiers do in NI construction. However, this not being the case, Weldon reasons that since its positive counterpart **many** is grammatical in NI constructions that all existential quantifiers must be positive.

1.4.2 The Non-copular Case

Weldon states, following Labov (1972), that expletives are optionally null only in the copular construction and obligatory in non-copular constructions. Here, she notes that

³ The HPSG is a non transformational. The details of Weldon's analysis are not relevant for the discussion here. See Pollard, and Sag (1994).

Sells et al.'s and Martin's models do not offer an explanation as to why their analyses allow the formulation of ungrammatical sentences involving non-copular verbs (38 is one construction that Martin's analysis does not account for). Based on the inadequacies of their arguments, Weldon argues that an inversion analysis must be maintained.

(38) * It/there don't nobody like me.

Instead of a null expletive analysis, she proposes that NI sentences are related to non-inverted sentences such as in (39).

(39) Nobody don't like me.

1.4.3 The Copular **be**₂ Verb

Weldon distinguishes four types of copula **be** (the negative auxiliary **ain't**). Of the four, there is only one that is analyzed as being existential.

(40)

Present Copular	ain't _{t₁}	It/There ain't no black Santa Claus.
	ain't _{t₂}	Ain't nobody a man.
Present Perfect	ain't _{t₃}	Ain't nobody been to the store yet.
Past Tense	ain't _{t₄}	Ain't nobody see it coming.
do-support		

Of the copular auxiliaries, Weldon has categorized the copula **be** into four types of **ain't** which are separated into three groups by tense. Of the three tenses, two of the four types of **ain't** are present tense. The first copula **be**₁ (41a) selects an optional expletive subject. The **be**₂ type (41b) selects a non-existential subject. The copula **be**₃ type (41c) is used in conjunction with a present perfect verb. The **be**₄ type (41d) is the past tense

auxiliary used instead of **do** in AAE. Weldon argues that **be**₁ appears in existential constructions and **be**₂ in NI constructions.

(41)

- a. (It/There) Ain't_{t1} no back Santa Claus.
- b. (?It/* There) Ain't_{t2} nobody a man.
- c. (* It/There) Ain't_{t3} nobody been to the store yet.
- d. (* It/there) Aint't_{t4} nobody see it coming.

In building her case for inversion (see below), Weldon notes that (42), under Sells et al.'s (1996) existential analysis, can be either analyzed as an inversion or an existential construction. Sells et al.'s analysis would predict that (42) would appear as (43), a biclausal construction. One would then have to assume that lexical items in CP (in this case *who*) are deleted. According to Weldon's hypothesis, the auxiliary is of the **ain't**_{t2} type which selects a non-existential subject. Therefore, giving it an inversion analysis, (42) would pattern as (44), a simple clause construction. As an inversion construct, this avoids the assumption that **who** has been deleted, and the problem of hypothesizing what motivates its deletion.

(42) Ain't nobody ever thought about picking nothing up. (NYC)

(43) (It/There) ain't nobody (*who*) ever thought about picking up nothing.

(44) Nobody ain't ever thought about picking up nothing.

However, Weldon shows that (42) is not a biclausal construction. As shown in (45 a, b), *wh*-extraction possible out of monoclausal constructions but not out of reduced relative clauses. The grammaticality of (45c) illustrates that NI constructions allow *wh*-extraction. This proves that NI constructions must be monoclausal. However, under Sells

et al.'s biclausal construction, NP extraction should be prohibited. Since under Sells et al.'s analysis the reduced relative clause functions like a complex NP, and extraction out of a complex NP is not possible, this demonstrates that NI sentences are monoclausal or "simple clauses".

(45)

- a. This is the thing t_i [s that nobody ever thought about picking t_i up].
- b. * This is the thing_i [_s that there ain't nobody (who ever thought about picking t_i up)].
- c. This is the thing_i [s that ain't nobody thought about picking t_i up].

(Weldon 1996 p. 12 ex. 69-72.)

Weldon presents another argument for the position of inversion. Milsark (1977), showed that existential constructions disallow non-state-descriptive (individual level) predicates. Since individual level subjects are ungrammatical in existential sentences and grammatical in NI constructions, she reasons that NI sentence must be inversion constructions.

(46)

- a. (There) Ain't nobody available (stage level)
- b. (* There) ain't nobody intelligent. (individual level)
- c. (* There) ain't nobody a man. (individual level)

(47)

- a. Nobody ain't available.
- b. Nobody ain't intelligent.
- c. Nobody ain't a man.

The examples above show that when the expletive is added to the NI construction containing an individual level predicate as the post auxiliary NP, the sentence is ungrammatical. Weldon contends that (46 b and c) are inversion constructions which relate to the non-inverted sentences of (47 b and c) respectively⁴.

1.4.4 Ambiguous Cases

Weldon's last argument suggests that there are some cases where determining the structure of certain sentences is difficult. Weldon claims that sentences such as (48) can be interpreted as an inversion construction or as an existential construction. In (48), Weldon hypothesizes that the copula **be** could either be the **ain't₂** type or the **ain't₁** type. When the sentence has the **ain't₂** type, she states that the auxiliary chooses a nominative subject, thus designating an inversion analysis. On the other hand, with the **ain't₁** type, the auxiliary selects an optional existential subject, and the existential analysis applies.

(48)

- a. Ain't nothin' broken on me to fix.
- b. I knew wasn't no Melinda in here.
- c. Wasn't nobody gettin' hurt or nothin'.

(Weldon 1997 p.14)

Given the fact that covert expletives are grammatical in these constructions, Weldon suggests that these sentences can either express an inversion construction, or existential construction. The inversion construction has a declarative reading which depicts a state that is definite or a state that is exact such as *John is in the room*, opposed to, *John is not in the room*. Existential sentences, on the other hand, express that of all the people who are in the room there is no person named John in the room: *There isn't a John in the room*.

⁴ Though Weldon predicts that (\$46b and c) are the non inverted counterpart of (\$47b and c), I find (\$47b and c) to be ungrammatical.

In sentences where the interpretation can either have an existential analysis or an inversion analysis, Weldon argues that these sentences can be disambiguated by determining the structure of the grammatical category modifying the post auxiliary subject. She attempts to illustrate this in the following manner.

(49)

- a. Ain't nobody that's happy rich.
- b. Nobody that's happy ain't rich.
- c. It/There ain't nobody that's happy rich.

In (49b), Weldon states that the interpretation would read as *Nobody that's happy is rich*, as an inversion construction. As an existential construction, the interpretation would read, *There isn't anybody who is happy being rich*. for (49c).

1.4.5 Existential Cases

Existential cases involve the auxiliary **be**₁ and are followed by a single NP complement. Weldon states that in existential sentences, the expletive is optionally null and utilizes Martin's unstressed analysis as a possible theory to explain why the expletive deletes. Last, Weldon argues that the subjects in these sentences must be a quantified NP. These expletive subjects are only optional with negative auxiliaries.

(50)

- a. Aint no black Santa Clause.
- b. Wasn't no such thing as : 'Well, I didn't do it.'
- c. Wasn't nobody I could trust.
- d. Ain't nothing you can do for them. (Weldon 1997 p.13)

Under an inversion analysis, the above examples are ungrammatical. Weldon holds that the **ain't_{t1}** chooses an existential subject and that sentences with the **ain't_{t1}** are ungrammatical in the non-inverted sentence construction. Weldon's argument indicates that since the **ain't_{t1}** type verb chooses an optional existential subject, (the expletives *there* and *it*,) these subjects cannot appear as the subjects of inverted sentences.

(51)

- a. * No black Santa Claus ain't.
- b. * No such thing as : 'Well, I didn't do it.'
- c. * Nobody I could trust wasn't
- d. * Nothing you can do for them ain't .

(Weldon 1997 p. 13)

In other words, when **ain't_{t1}** type verbs select an optional existential subject, an existential sentence construction is formed, and use of the expletive subject is optional.

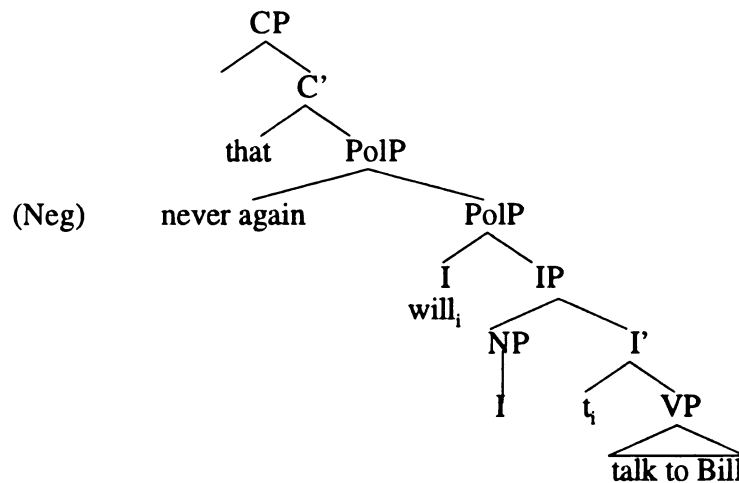
In order to account for inversion in embedded clauses, Weldon assumes Culicover's (1991) analysis of negative inversion in Standard English (SE). In SE, sentence such as (52) where the negative has been fronted are grammatical.

(52)

- a. I said that under no circumstances will I talk to Bill.
- b. I said that never again will I talk to Bill.

Culicover argues that there is an extra position existing between CP and IP, which he calls Polarity Phrase (PolP) which is the landing site of the fronted negative as shown in (53).

(53)



In (53), the auxiliary raises above the subject to head PolP where the fronted negative resides (in [Spec, PolP]).

1.5 Summary

In retrospect, we have learned that there are several points that hold consistent in the literature on NI constructions in AAE thus far. One consistent aspect of the literature has been the method of determining whether a particular sentence is existential or inversion: In sentences where the expletive can appear, the sentence construction is given an existential

analysis. On the other hand, in sentences where the expletive cannot appear, the sentence is given an inversions analysis.

Also, we have learned that in NI constructions, the post auxiliary subject must adhere to the definiteness effect. This condition requires the post auxiliary subject to be indefinite. Further, it has been shown that the negative auxiliary does not move to CP. This is illustrated in embedded sentences where the negative auxiliary appears along side the complementizer **that**. However, we found through Weldon, following Culicover (1991), that there is an additional node existing between IP and CP following her inversion analysis. As a result, the landing site for the auxiliary could be PolP, instead of C. PolP being a polarity Phrase, would license the negative feature, thus, the auxiliary raises to PolP in order to form NI expressions

Last, it has been convincingly argued that NI constructions are not biclausal constructions with reduced relative clauses. This rids us of the misnomer that NI constructions delete the subject complementizer **that** from CP, in hopes of maintaining an existential account of NI sentences.

CHAPTER 2

The aim of this chapter is to outline the major problems that exist in the current analyses of NI constructions. In the previous literature, there are several arguments which hold that there is a need for two structures to account for NI constructions. I will argue that NI constructions have only one structural analysis, this structure being existential. The chapter begins with the discussion of Labov's analysis, which contends that NI sentences are like fronted negative sentences in Standard English. I will show that fronted negative sentences differ from NI sentences in respect to the indefiniteness restriction.

Next, I will discuss the shortcomings of Sells et al.'s Internal Subject analysis. Here, problems arise when considering c-command. Sells et al.'s analysis allows the ungrammatical construction of sentences which c-command does not rule out. Sells et al.'s analysis also does not consider the significance of definiteness restriction.

Areas of Martin's and Weldon's analysis, when tested, show that several aspects are problematic. In the following, I will show that Martin's licensing condition does not rule out NPI's in embedded clauses. Also, I will illustrate that Weldon's analysis is problematic for the simple fact that she does not recognize that NI sentence must adhere to definiteness restriction.

2.1 Problems with NI sentences as Fronted Negative constructions

Labov's analysis states that sentence with the verb **ain't** appearing initially are existential sentences with null expletives. The other sentence type has a modal verb appearing initially and is said to pattern after SE's fronted negative sentences where subject auxiliary inversion (SAI) occurs. For example, in the sentences below, the auxiliary moves above the subject in front of the negative adverbial. Fronted negative sentences are derived from non-inverted sentences. In the examples below, (54a) is the derivative of (54b).

(54)

- a. Never again will Susan trust another man with her heart.
- b. Susan will never trust another man with her heart again.

In Labov's analysis, there is no formal syntactic comparison made between NI constructions and fronted negative sentences in Standard English. He assumes that both the NI constructions and the fronted negative constructions have the same movement operations of SAI. If AAE NI sentences are fronted negative sentences, we would expect the verb to move from I° to C° . However, there are several arguments which illustrates that an inversion analysis is highly unlikely. First, Sells et al (1996 p.603) show that if NI sentences involve movement from I° to C° , they can not occur in embedded sentences. Under the inversion analysis, this movement would be blocked when the complementizer **that** is present in C° . The complementizer, **that** when present would occupy the only position where the auxiliary could land.

(55)

- a. I know a way that [can't nobody start a fight].
- b. Pilate they remembered as a pretty woods-wild girl "that [couldn't nobody put shoes on]." (Sells et al., p.603)

However, NI sentences do appear grammatically in embedded sentences containing the complementizer **that**, therefore, the auxiliary in NI sentences does not undergo I° to C° movement.

There is further evidence to suggest that the auxiliary in NI sentences do not undergo inversion. The question phrase **how come** does not allow I^0 to C^0 subject-aux

inversion. This is shown in (56c and e). On the other hand, NI sentences are acceptable with **how come** as (56a, b and d) show.

(56)

- a. How come ain't no flowers on the table.
- b. How come there ain't no flower on the table.
- c. * How come ain't there no flower on the table.
- d. How come John didn't leave.
- e. * How come didn't John leave.

Second, if we assume that NI constructions are fronted negative constructions, we should expect sentences with non inverted auxiliaries to be grammatical, as non fronted negative sentences are in SE. In the examples below, we see that fronted negative sentences do not behave as NI constructions do. This suggests that AAE, NI sentences and Fronted Negative Sentences are structurally different.

(57)

- a. Can't nobody go to the store.
- b. Can't no boy wear a dress and not be noticed.
- c. * Nobody can't go to the store.
- d. * No boy can't wear a dress and not be noticed.

In example (57), the negative quantifier cannot form a grammatical sentence when it is to the left of the negative auxiliary. In fronted negative sentences, the movement of the negative is stylistic. If NI sentences are similar, then any grammatical fronted negative sentence should be a grammatical NI sentence. The examples in (58) are acceptable fronted negative sentences in SE, along with their non-fronted equivalents.

(58)

- a. Never has Utah beaten the Bulls in the finals.
- b. Utah can't beat the Bulls in the finals.
- d. Not once has John forgotten to say his Sunday prayer.
- e. John has not once forgotten to say his Sunday prayer.

In SE, fronted negative sentences are also quite restricted. For example, the simple negation **not** cannot front, so the fronted version of (59a, and c) are not possible, as shown in (59 b, and d).

(59)

- a. Utah can't beat the Bulls.
- b. * Not can Utah beat the Bulls.
- c. John can't forget to say his prayers
- d. * Not can John forget to say his prayers.

In addition, AAE NI sentences are unacceptable in SE (e.g. 57 above).

However, in NI constructions, the negative auxiliary cannot raise above certain types of subjects. In a sentence with a definite NP as its subject (60), the sentence is ungrammatical.

(60)

- a. * Can't Utah beat the Bulls in the finals.
(meaning Utah can't beat the Bulls in the finals.)
- b. * Can't John forget to say his Sunday prayer.
(meaning: John can't forget to say his Sunday prayer.)
- c. * Can't John never forget to say his Sunday prayer.
(meaning: John can never forget to say his Sunday prayer.)

In the above examples, we see that NI sentences and fronted negative sentences behave differently in terms of inverting over definite NP subjects. In (60a) the non-fronted sentence reads, "Utah can't beat the Bulls in the finals." If we compare the sentence structures of (59a and c) to (60a, b, and c) we will notice that NI constructions have a strict adherence to the definiteness effect. The subject NPs that are ungrammatical in the sentences above, are all definite NPs. Milsark (1977) shows definite NPs have the same ungrammatical effect in existential sentences as shown in (61).

(61)

- a. There is a wolf at the door.
- b. * There is the wolf at the door.
- c. There were several people cycling along the creek.
- d. * There were John and Mary cycling along the creek.
- e. There was an article mentioned.
- f. * There was Frank's article mentioned.

(Milsark 1977, p. 4. ex 5a-f)

It is interesting to note that (60a), for example, can turn into an acceptable NI construction if the subject is negative, as is in (62).

(62) Can't no Utah beat the Bulls in the finals.

However, negating the subject also makes it indefinite with the meaning "any Utah team", thus providing further evidence for the definiteness restriction.

Even in NI constructions that do not contain the verb **be**, the conditions of definiteness restriction must still be met. The examples below demonstrate that a NI sentence must meet the conditions of the definiteness restriction. The fact that fronted negative sentences lack this condition, as the contrast between (58) and (60) shows, demonstrates that NI sentences are not fronted negative constructions. In AAE NI constructions, the NP must be indefinite or the result is ungrammatical as shown in the contrast between (63) and (64).

(63)

- a. Can't nobody stand to be in this rut again
- b. Can't nobody land on the moon.
- c. Can't nothing you do hurt me.
- d. Can't nobody root for the Boston Celtics.

(64)

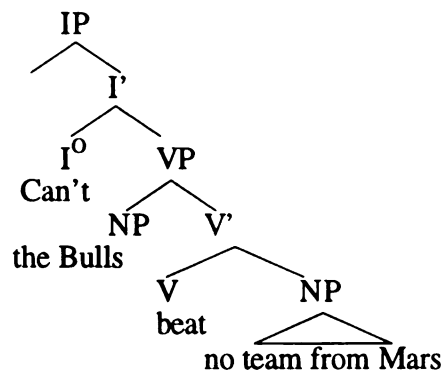
- a. * Can't I stand to be in this rut again.
- b. * Can't the Russians land on the moon.
- c. * Can't I root for the Boston Celtics.
- d. * Can't you hurt me.

The fact that the definiteness restriction is required in NI sentences makes Labov's inversion analysis questionable. If NI sentences are inversion constructions, why must definiteness restriction be a factor in determining its grammaticality?

2.2 Problems with Sells et al. 1996

Sells et al. (1996:596) also reject Labov's inversion analysis and they argue that the negative quantifier must be c-commanded by the negative auxiliary to account for NI sentences structure. In dealing with sentences containing non-copula verbs, this condition acts as a constraint which enables the subject to remain in VP. However, the ungrammaticality of (65) is problematic for Sells et al.'s analysis. Under their analysis, (65) should be grammatical; the negative quantifier is c-commanded by the negative auxiliary meeting constraint (I). However, the sentence is still ungrammatical due to the definiteness restriction. Like existential sentences, the definiteness restriction only shows up on the post-auxiliary subject. This illustrates that NI sentences behave more like existential sentences than fronted negative sentences.

(65) * Can't the bulls beat no team from Mars



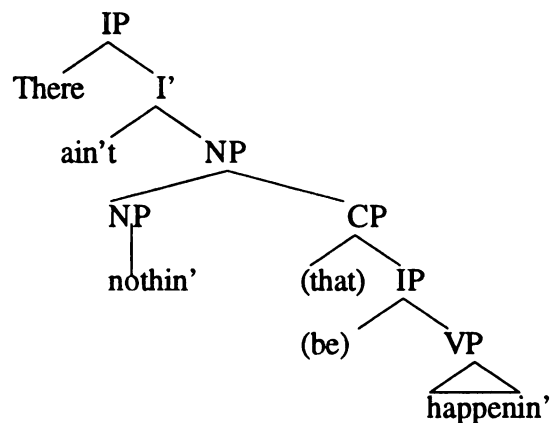
Sells et al.'s analysis predicts that NI sentences such as these would be grammatical with definite nouns as the post auxiliary subject because the negative auxiliary does c-command a negative quantifier, the NP "no team from Mars". The tree in (65) shows that the conditions of c-command are being met. The branching node that dominates

negative auxiliary is IP', and this dominates the negative quantifier **no team from Mars**. Their analysis has no way of accounting for the definiteness restriction that is on the post auxiliary subject.

Sells' et al. internal subject analysis argues that NI constructions with non-copula verbs do not involve movement of the subject. This condition of non-movement relies on the ability of the negative auxiliary to c-command the negative quantifier which restricts the subject from moving out of VP. As a result, the negative quantifier can never appear to the left of the negative auxiliary, the subject position [Spec, IP]. The ungrammaticality of (65) cannot be accounted for by c-command. What rules out (65) is that the definiteness effect is not satisfied.

Returning to Sells et. al.'s existential analysis, there is another area where problems occur. Sells et al.'s analysis holds that NI sentences which fall under the existential analysis are biclausal constructions with a reduced relative clause as shown in (64).

(66) There ain't nothin' that be happenin'.



However, as the discussion of Weldon (1996) in chapter 1 has shown, the reduced relative clause analysis cannot be correct. To sum up, Sells et al.'s analysis has serious problems and thus cannot be adopted.

2.3. Problems with Martin's Definiteness Effect and Null Expletives

Martin argues that because NPIs are licensed in embedded clauses in NI sentences such as (67), NI cannot involve auxiliary inversion (AI). In *Wh*-constructions, AI hinders Infl from assigning its negative feature to the embedded NPI. In NI sentences, the NPI appears grammatically in the downstairs predicate. Because Infl is able to assign its negative feature to the NPI, this shows that NI sentences do not involve AI.

(67)

- a. Ain't many doctors around here (that) know {nothin/one iota} bout (no)acupuncture.
- b. Don't nobody say that dealers sellin drugs in the school yard {no more/any more}
- c. Can't a man in this place say he happy bout {nothin/a damn thing}
- d. There aren't many doctors around here that know anything about acupuncture.
- e. There isn't anybody that says dealers are selling drugs in the school yard anymore.
- f. There isn't a man in this place who can say he's happy about anything.

(Martin 1996 p. 64 ex. 29)

The main problem with this analysis is that Martin presumes that NI sentences are biclausal constructions. Martin's entire argument relies on this premise in fact.

Contrary to what Martin claims, and as Weldon proves with the NP extraction test, NI sentences are monoclausal constructions and not biclausal constructions. Therefore, the licensing conditions that Martin applies to embedded NPIs cannot apply to NI sentences where there is only one clause. As long as the NPI is within the same clause that Infl is in, Martin's licensing condition allows Infl to assign its negative feature. Therefore, Martin's licensing condition cannot rule out inversion as a possible analysis.

In addition to the mechanical problems that Martin's analysis has, it fails (as Weldon also notes) to account for NI sentences containing initial non-copular verbs. Though he points out that the definiteness effect applies in NI constructions, he fails to give

an account of how these sentences can be existential constructions when they form ungrammatical constructions when the expletive is added.

(68)

- a. Can't nobody see us talking.
- b. Can't nobody even create the mess you got us in.
- c. * It/There Can't nobody see us talking.
- d. * It/there can't nobody even create the mess you got us in.

2.4 Problems with Weldon's HPSG Account

Weldon's (1993) HPSG analysis of AAE NI constructions (along with Labov) concludes that there must be both an existential and an inversion analysis to account for NI sentences. Weldon argues that sentences with non-copular verbs, and one particular case involving **ain't** are inversion constructions. She argues that sentences with overt expletives are ungrammatical because they derive from non-inverted constructions. However, (like Labov) Weldon does not address why the subject in NI must be an indefinite NP. Sentences with definite NPs pose the same problem for her analysis as they do for Labov's. In all NI sentences containing both copular and non-copular auxiliaries, the result is always ungrammatical when the subject is definite.

(69)

- a. * Ain't John in the room
- b. * Don't the military kill innocent people.

Furthermore, her analysis does not account for non-inverted ungrammatical sentences involving definite NPs, as in (70).

(70)

- a. * No team from Mars can't beat no Bulls.
- b. * Nobody can't remain in the room.

Weldon tries to annul the definiteness effect by re analyzing the post auxiliary subject as a positive quantifier. She reasons that the post auxiliary appears negative because it is governed by a negative auxiliary. The evidence that she provides involves the positive quantifier, 'many people', in NI sentences. Since the negative counterpart, 'few people', is ungrammatical in NI constructions, she argues that post auxiliary NPs are not negative.

(71)

- a. Don't many of them live around here.
- b. * Don't few people live around here.

Weldon's argument is based on the relationship between **any** and **no**. In SE, when the auxiliary is negative the quantifier that the auxiliary chooses is the indeterminate **any**. In AAE, the opposite occurs; when the auxiliary is negative, the auxiliary chooses the negative indefinite **no**.

(72)

- a. John didn't do anything. (SE)
- b. John didn't do nothing (AAE)

With the quantifiers **many** and **few**, Weldon expects the same relationship to hold true. With the negative auxiliary, she predicts that AAE will choose the negative item **few**. However, this is not the case. In AAE, the relationship that the quantifiers **many** has with **few** does not pattern after the relationship that **no** has with **any**. The examples in

(73) show that **many** and **few** function the same in AAE as they do in SE. In AAE, as in SE, the negative quantifier, **few**, illustrated in (73c), is ungrammatical within a negative auxiliary construction. Only the positive quantifier forms a grammatical sentence with the negative auxiliary, as (73d) illustrates.

(73)

- a. Many people will die. (SE)
- b. Few people will live. (SE)
- c. * Few people won't live. (AAE)
- d. Many people won't live. (AAE)

The difference in the relationship that **any** and **no** have with **few** and **many** is shown in (74). The quantifier **many** and **few** can appear as subjects. On the other hand, while **no** (74d) can be the subject of a negative sentence, the indeterminate **any**, in (74c), cannot form a negative sentence. However, **any** can appear as the subject in positive sentences containing modals (74e). The contrast between (74b and c) shows that **few** does not behave like **any**.

(74)

- a. Many people left.
- b. Few people left.
- c. * Anybody left.
- d. Nobody left.
- e. Anyone can leave.

Furthermore, the negative quantifier, **few people**, cannot form a grammatical negative existential sentence in either SE or AAE. 'Few people' is a problem for negative

existential sentences in general, and affords Weldon a poor position to base her argument on.

(75)

- a. There aren't many doctors that live around here.
- b. * There aren't few doctors that live around here.

There are some existential sentences in AAE where the negative auxiliary and the negative quantifier **few** do appear in the same sentence.

(76)

- a. * It ain't a few women in here
- b. (It) ain't but a few women in here.
- c. * It ain't but many women in here.

However, (76a and b) illustrate that **few** cannot appear grammatically without the conjunction, **but**. This indicates that **few** may not be within the scope of the negative auxiliary. Weldon's basic claim is that in sentence such as (77) where the expletive cannot occur, an inversion analysis must be used.

(77)

- a. Can't nobody tag you then
- b. Before they invented them kicks, couldn't nobody do that.
- c. Won't nobody catch us.
- d. Don't nobody break up a fight.
- e. Didn't nobody see it; didn't nobody hear it.

In sentences where the expletive would yield an ungrammatical sentence involving copular verbs, Weldon argues that these are also inversion constructions. She holds that these sentences contain predicate NPs which cannot appear in existential sentences. Weldon notes that Milsark (1977) discovered that existential sentences only allow simple NPs in the post auxiliary position. Weldon provides examples of NI constructions containing the verb **ain't**, where ungrammaticality occurs when the expletive is added.

(78)

- a. Ain't nobody ever thought about picking up nothing.
- b. Ain't no cop never beat me in my head.
- c. Ain't nobody never told me what to do.

(79)

- a. * There/it ain't nobody ever thought about picking up nothing.
- b. * There/it ain't no cop never beat me in my head.
- c. * There/it ain't nobody never told me what to do.

In order for the expletive to appear grammatically in these sentences, the analysis which views NI sentences as biclausal construction (which Weldon convincingly extinguishes) has to be applied.

(80)

- a. There/It ain't nobody who ever thought about picking up nothing.
- b. There/It ain't no cop who ever beat me in my head.
- c. There/It ain't nobody who ever told me what to do.

Weldon's also argues that an inversion analysis applies to certain sentences containing the copular-be. This particular sentence contains the **ain't**₂ type verb which selects a individual level predicate.

(81)

- a. Ain't nobody a man.
- b. Ain't nobody gon' let you walk all around town to find somebody to whip them.

Following Milsark (1977), Weldon argues that existential constructions disallow individual level predicates. As a result, the following are ruled ungrammatical.

(82)

- a. * There/It ain't nobody a man.
- b. * There/it ain't nobody gon' let you walk around town to find somebody to whip them.

However, it is questionable whether or not these sentences actually yield ungrammatical sentences. As a speaker of AAE, two of the three examples that Weldon provides are grammatical with the expletive (the same judgments were given by other speakers of AAE). With some examples, the expletive **it** is preferred over **there**. In (82d), the sentence containing **it** sounds worse than the sentence containing **there**. This sheds new light on Martin's analysis of sentences containing **there** as opposed to **it**. In some sentences, as (83a and b) illustrate, **it** and **there** are used synonymously, while in other sentence constructions they contrast entirely as in (83c and d).

(83)

a. It is a man in the room.

b. There is a man in the room

Context : Do you have any scissors?

c. There is a pair on my desk.

d. * It is a pair on my desk

Though, arguably, some of these constructions do not accept overt expletives, Weldon does not address why the subjects in each sentence must be indefinite. If these are truly inversion constructions, the definiteness effect should have no consequence. Nevertheless, evidence demonstrates that this is not the case. In (83), the result is ungrammatical with definite post auxiliary subjects.

(84)

a. * Ain't John sittin' in the back seat. (meaning John is not sitting in the back seat)

b. * Ain't the Wilsons going to the show with the Hobbs. (meaning; The Wilsons are not going to the show with the Hobbs)

Weldon's analysis, following Culicover (1992), also seeks to remedy the IP to CP movement operation by suggesting that is another maximal projection, the polarity phrase (PolP), appears between IP and CP.

(85)

a. Which books did Lee say [_{CP}that [_{PolP} only to Robin]will [_{IP}she give]]].

b. These are the books [_{CP}which [_{PolP} only to Robin] will [_{IP} Lee give]]].

c. Lee wonders [_{CP}why [_{PolP} in no way] would[_{IP} Robin volunteer]]].

Culicover shows the negative inversion can occur within *wh*-construction.

Culicover notes that the moved or fronted negative appears to the right of the complementizer **that** and before the raised IP. Culicover argues that this shows that C can take as its complement a maximal projection, PolP, which is distinct from IP. This projection can have as its head Neg, which agrees with a negative in [Spec, PolP]. Though Culicover's convincingly show that PolP exist as a possible landing site for fronted negative constructions, Weldon does not show why the subjects of AAE NI sentences require their subjects to be indefinite quantifiers. In Culicover's examples, sentences involving negative inversion do not have this restriction of the definiteness effect.

(86)

- a. These are the books can't nobody take home.
- b. Before they invented them kicks, couldn't nobody do that.
- c. Until Wu-tang came on the scene, didn't nobody know 'bout Inspector Dec.

(87)

- d. * These are the book can't Stacey take home.
- e. * Before they invented them kicks, couldn't John do that.
- f. * Until Wu-tang came on the scene, didn't the Source know 'bout Inspector Dec.

Weldon argues that (88a) can either be an inversion construction or an existential construction. Under the inversion analysis Weldon argues that (88a) means (88b); and as an existential analysis, (88a) means (88c).

(88)

- a. Ain't nobody that's happy rich.
- b. Nobody that 's happy ain't rich. (meaning: Nobody that's happy is rich)
- c. It/There ain't nobody that's happy rich. (meaning: There isn't anybody who is happy being rich.)

However, as far as I can tell, (88b) is not a possible interpretation for (88a). This was not only my judgment, but the judgment of several other speakers of AAE as well. As a sentence, (88b) is ungrammatical (shown below as 89b). The ambiguity that Weldon states is predicted to exist under Weldon's structural analysis because the sentence could be existential (as in 89c or d) or an inversion construction (89b). There is no ambiguity in its meaning. However, since these examples are not ambiguous, it is unlikely that (89a) can ever have an inversion analysis as Weldon predicts.

(89)

- a. Ain't nobody that's happy rich
- b. * Nobody that's happy ain't rich.
- c. It ain't nobody that's happy rich
- d. There ain't nobody that's happy rich.

2.5. Summary

We have discussed the flaws in the analysis of the NI constructions in AAE proposed so far. What we have discovered from these studies is that when two analyses for NI constructions are proposed, there is no account for why the definiteness effect influences the grammaticality of the sentence. When an inversion analysis is proposed, the definiteness effect is generally ignored. As was illustrated above, if NI sentences pattern

like inversion sentences, then the definiteness effect should not be a factor in determining sentence grammaticality.

On the other hand, in claiming the NI sentence incorporates just an existential structure, as Martin does, the problem that presents itself is how to account for why the expletive does not show up in particular NI sentence constructions, especially those that do not involve the copula **be**.

CHAPTER 3

With the exception of Martin, all the authors discussed in the previous chapters conclude that NI sentences involve two distinct constructions, an inversion analysis and an existential analysis. There are several reasons why these authors hold to this analysis. First, not all NI sentences involve the use of existential **be**. Second, in NI sentences that do not contain existential **be**, an overt expletive **there** cannot appear while in sentences containing **be** an overt expletive can appear. Third, in existential sentences individual level predicates cannot appear, but they do appear in NI constructions. Nonetheless, we have seen that in all cases of NI, whether they involve existential **be** or not, the definiteness restriction is placed on their subjects. The definiteness restriction is not predicted under an inversion analysis, since negative fronting in SE does not obey this restriction.

In this chapter, I will argue, because of the definiteness effect, that all NI inversion structures are like existential constructions, even in cases that do not involve existential **be**. The main problem to be solved is the pattern of data in (90). Specific attention will be given to sentences patterning like (90c), where the expletive cannot appear.

(90)

- a. There ain't nobody in the room.
- b. Ain't nobody in the room.
- c. * There can't nobody tag you.
- d. Can't nobody tag you.

I will argue that (90c) is ungrammatical because the post-auxiliary subject **nobody** cannot receive Case, while in (90a) it can. Because of this, the pre-auxiliary subject position can be filled in (90a) but not in (90c).

3.1. Case Theory

Before explaining why the expletive **there** cannot be overt in certain NI sentences, I will first discuss why it is in general that Noun Phrases (NP)s need to be Case assigned. Like all NPs we expect the expletive **there** to meet the same Case requirements as do other NPs. Descriptively, Case is assigned to an NP in a structural position that relates to a Grammatical Function (GF) in a sentence (Chomsky 1981). Grammatical Functions are Subjects, Direct Objects (DO), Indirect Objects (IO), and the object of the preposition (OP). There are two different types of Case in English: Nominative Case and Accusative.

Case can be assigned to the NP by either a Verb (V) or a preposition (P), however, N(ouns) and A(djectives) can not assign Case to an NP as shown in (91).

(91)

- a. NP: * the destruction the city
- b. VP: destroy the City
- c. AP: * destructive her self-esteem
- d. PP: with the boy

In (91a) , the N **destruction** does not assign Case to the NP **the city**, which violates the Case Filter. The Case Filter specifies that every NP with a phonetic matrix must receive Case. With the Case Filter, we can account for why (91a) is ungrammatical. The same goes for AP; when an A takes as its argument an NP the result is ungrammatical, as shown in (91c). However, when either V or P take on an NP argument the result is grammatical. We can account for the difference between (91a and c) and (91b and d) with Case assignment.

In cases where the NP argument is ungrammatical, we notice that neither a verb nor a preposition appears. In the same NP and AP construction found in (91a and c), the NP argument can appear when the preposition *of* is added:

(92)

- a. NP: the destruction [of] the city
- b. AP: destructive [of] her self-esteem

From this we can conclude that the difference between NPs and APs and VPs and PPs is that Vs and Ps can take on NP arguments and Ns and As cannot. The difference that allows the NP argument in VP and PP is Case.

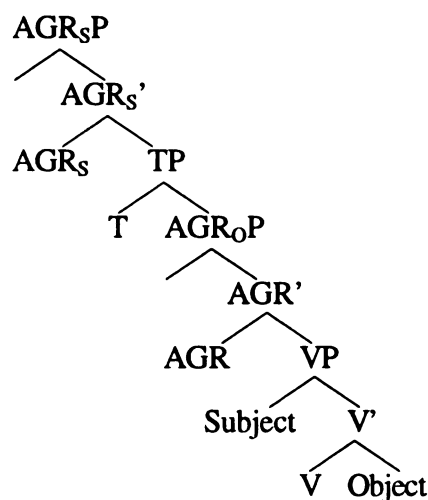
Now that we know that all NPs occurring in a sentence need to be assigned Case, we can assume that the NP subject of a clause needs Case as well. Under the Minimalist theory (chomsky 1993), Case assignment is accomplished through raising. It is presumed that the subject and the object start in VP where the theta- roles are assigned. Both then raise to their respective AGR phrases. This movement allows all structural cases to be assigned under Spec head agreement.

Consider the sentence (93):

(93) John met Bill.

The basic clausal structure is assumed to be (95). Nominative Case is assigned in Spec AGR_SP by T + AGR and Accusative Case is assigned in Spec AGR_OP by V + AGR.

(94)



In order to derive the correct word order from (94), we must assume that movement of the subject is overt. The subject raises from Spec VP to the Spec of AGR_S. T raises from the head of TP to the head of AGR_S where it forms a Spec head relation with Spec AGR_S.⁵ Although the Object must raise from the complement position in VP to the Spec of AGR_O, here movement is covert. The verb also moves covertly to the head of AGR_O forming a Spec-head relation with the object.

The fact that subject movement is overt and object movement is covert can be shown by the examples in (95), from Lasnik (1993).

⁵ Note that Martin, Sells et al., as well as Weldon utilize IP. Instead of IP I utilize AGR_SP and TP which are both the equivalent of IP. IP is the conflation of two separate heads AGR_SP and TP. (See Pollock (1989) and Chomsky (1993).

(95)

- a. * has been arrested John.
- b. John has been arrested.
- c. The police have arrested John
- d. * The police have John arrested.

In (95a), the NP **John** stays internal to VP whose verb is transitive and the sentence is ungrammatical. In (95b), assuming that **John** started in VP (the position that John is in (95a)), subject raises out VP to Spec AGR_S. In (95c) when movement of the object is covert, the sentence is grammatical. This contrasts with (95d) which is ungrammatical because the object has undergone overt movement to Spec AGR_O. The reason that subject NPs must undergo overt movement is that English has a Strong NP feature which requires the subject of a clause to be filled. This principle is called the extended Projection Principle (EPP).

If not for the EPP then (95a) should be grammatical; the subject, like the object could remain in VP and raise at LF to Spec AGR_S. However, though Case could be assigned by raising the subject at LF, the EPP requires the subject to raise at PF. This fact is obvious in that (95b) is grammatical when overt movement of the subject takes place.

Furthermore, Lasnik shows that the subject does not move to AGR_S to get Case. In sentences involving the verbs like **believe** and **consider** which can take an infinitive clause as their argument, Lasnik shows that the subjects of these clauses move to Spec AGR_S even though this position is without Case. This demonstrates that Subject moves to AGR_S to satisfy the EPP and not Case.

(96)

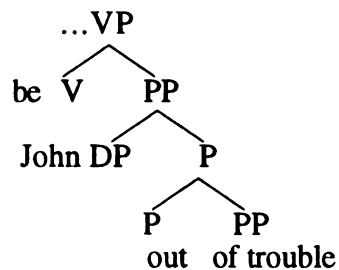
- a. * I hope John to be out of trouble.
- b. I consider John to be out of trouble.
- c. I believe John to be a coward out of trouble.

In (96a), the sentence is ungrammatical because its embedded subject is not assigned Case by the verb **hope**. On the other hand, the verbs **consider** and **believe** can exceptionally assign accusative Case to the subject of their clausal arguments. Like objects, the subjects of infinitive clauses are assigned Case by raising at LF to AGR_OP where a Spec-head relation is established with the raising of the subject to Spec AGR_O and the verb to the head of AGR_O.

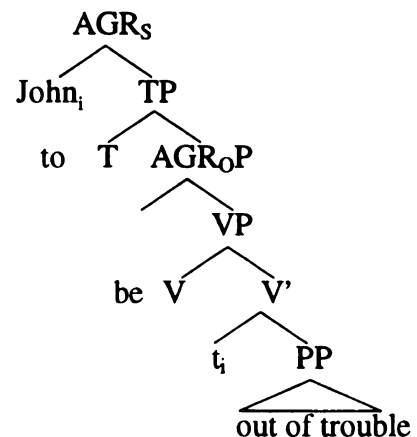
This assumes that **John**, the subject of the infinitive clause starts out inside the predicate before overt movement to AGR_SP occurs as shown in (97a). At PF, **John** satisfies the EPP by raising to the subject position Spec AGR_S as shown in (97b). Finally, at LF, in (97c) **John** raises to AGR_O where it receives accusative Case from the verb **consider** which also raises to the head of AGR_OP from VP.

(97)

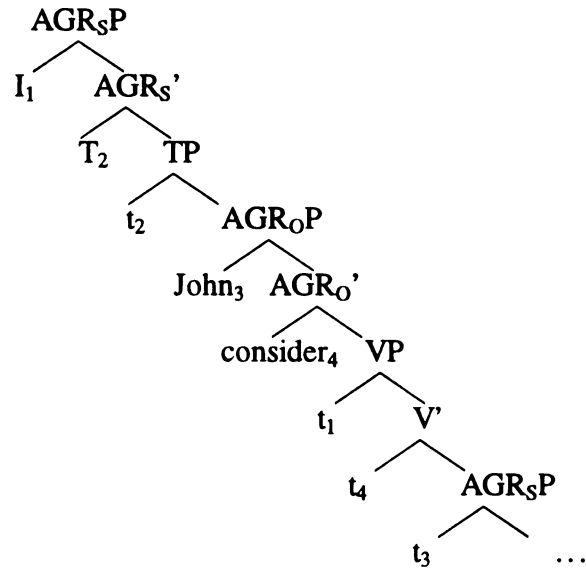
a.



b.



c.



These kinds of structures (96b and c) are known as Exceptional Case Marking (ECM) structures. They are called ECM because accusative Case is being assigned to a subject and not an object.

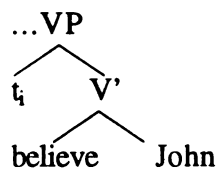
(98)

- a. I believe John
- b. I believe John to be a fool.

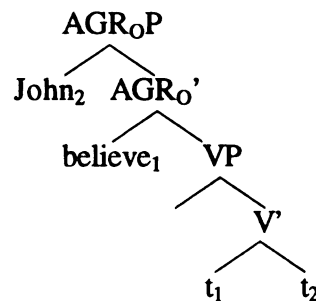
In (98), the arguments of the verb **believe** are quite different. In (98a) **John** is the complement of V at PF, while **John** in (98b) is not. It is in the Spec Position of AGR_S in the infinitive Clause at PF. In (98b), the entire infinitive clause is the complement of V and not just **John**. However, at LF **John** in both (98a and b) must raise to the Spec of AGR_O in order to be assigned Case as shown in (99). (Only relevant parts of the structure are shown.)

(99)

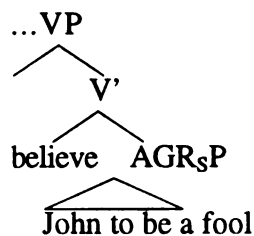
a. Spellout



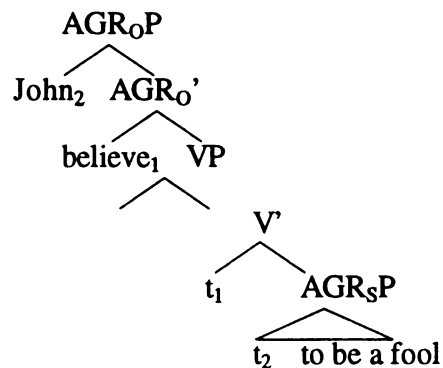
LF



b. Spellout



LF



3.2. Case and Expletives

Now given the fact that all NPs need Case and that existential subjects are also NPs, it follows that they also need Case. Lasnik (1995) along with Chomsky (1993) shows that

expletives in existential sentences occupy the position of the subject. The expletive, though it is not assigned a theta-role, meets all the morphological requirements of the Subject filling the requirements of tense and agreement. The associate (the post-auxiliary subject) is assigned partitive Case and its theta-role is assigned by the predicate.

(100)

- a. A strange man is *t* in the garden.
- b. *e* is a strange man in the garden.
- c. There is a strange man in the garden.

In (204a) Lasnik (1995) argues (revising Chomsky's (1993) assumption) that overt movement of the subject does not take place in order for the NP subject **a strange man** to receive Case. Under Lasnik's theory, the subject originally receives Case (partitive Case) where it is positioned in (100b). Lasnik argues that it would not have to move until LF and that the overt movement in (100a) occurs only because in (100b) the empty subject position violates the EPP. In other words, overt movement occurs in order to meet the strong NP feature of English. Furthermore, in (100c), Lasnik argues that when an expletive is added, the post-auxiliary subject (the associate) can remain in the post-auxiliary position provided the expletive checks the Strong NP features and that its associate receives partitive Case. Lasnik concludes that both the expletive and its associate must be assigned Case independently. When either one of the two is not assigned Case the result is ungrammatical as shown in (101).

(101)

- a. I want there to be someone here at 6:00.
- b. * I want there someone here at 6:00.
- c. * I hope there to be someone here at 6:00.

The contrast between (101a) and (101b) shows that **be** is required to assign Case to the associate. The contrast between (101a) and (101c) shows that the expletive also needs Case: **want** is able to assign accusative Case to the expletive, but **hope** is not, just as in (96) above.

Not all verbs can assign partitive Case to the associate however, as the data in (102) shows:

(102)

- a. Someone laughed
- b. * There someone laughed.
- c. Someone arrived.
- d. There arrived someone.

Intransitive verbs like **laugh** in (102a and b) where the subject is generated in Spec VP cannot assign partitive Case. This is why the expletive cannot appear in (102d).

Unaccusative verbs like **arrive** whose argument is internal to VP as in (102c and d) can assign partitive Case. Lasnik argues that the associate in (102d) is assigned partitive Case while the expletive is assigned nominative Case. This establishes the fact that the expletive and its associate are assigned Case independently.

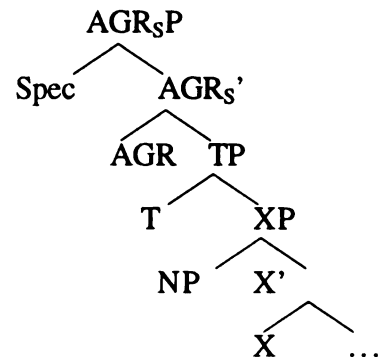
3.3. Case and NI constructions

Now that we have established that the expletive and its associate must meet requirements of Case independently, we can now argue that the expletive cannot appear in

certain NI sentences since its appearance blocks the associate from raising at LF to get Case.

The general structure of the NI construction is shown in (103).

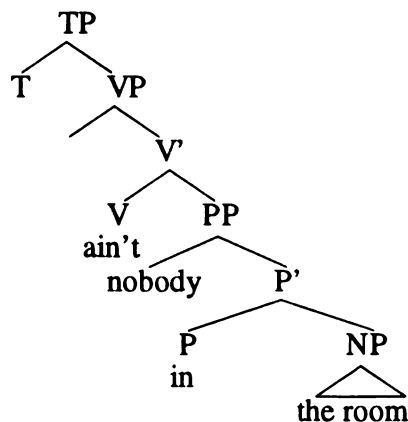
(103)



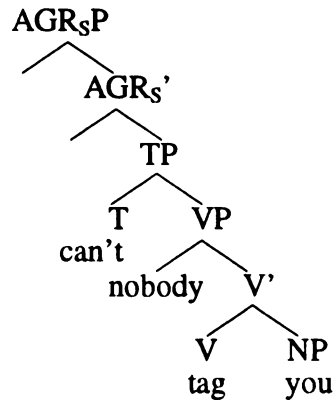
In (103), the negative auxiliary is in the head of TP. XP can be either NP, PP, AP or VP. For NI sentences given either an “inversion” analysis or an “existential” analysis, their structures are almost identical and can be both represented by the trees in (103) as (104) illustrates.

(104)

a.



b.



Returning to the earlier argument, we learned that an inversion analysis would assume that the auxiliary raises above the subject and assigns Case through its trace to the subject. However, the inversion analysis ignores the fact that NI sentences demand their subjects to be indefinite. On the other hand, under an existential analysis all subjects which are internal to VP must be indefinite. This incorporates the definiteness effect.

(105)

- a. There is a man in the room.
- b. * There is the man in the room.
- c. A/The man is in the room.

(106)

- a. There arrived a man.
- b. * There arrived the man.
- c. A/The man arrived.

Belletti (1988) shows that when the subject stays in VP that it must be indefinite as shown in (105a and 106a). When in Spec AGR_s the indefiniteness restriction does not

affect the subject, which can be either indefinite or definite, as shown in (105c and 106c).

This generalization holds true whether the verb is existential **be** or not as (106) shows.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, the inversion analysis is based solely on the fact that the expletive cannot occur in sentences where the existential **be** does not occur.

(107)

- a. * There can't nobody tag you.
- b. * There don't nobody play with me.
- c. Can't nobody tag you.
- d. Don't nobody play with me.
- e. Ain't nobody home yet.
- f. There Ain't nobody home yet.

It was earlier determined that since in SE NI sentences are not restricted to indefinite subjects, an inversion analysis for NI in AAE was ruled out. First in view of Belletti's data, the structures in (104) predict that all subjects in NI sentences will be indefinite, as shown in (108).

(108)

- a. Ain't nothing going on.
- b. * Aint' the party going on.
- c. Won't nothing stop us now.
- d. * Won't John stop us now.

Second, taking into account Lasnik's argument that the expletive and its associate must be assigned Case independently, we know that if the expletive is present, there must be a way of assigning partitive Case to the associate. We have already seen that **be** is able

to assign partitive Case. Modal auxiliaries, on the other hand, can only take VP arguments, as shown in (109).

(109)

- a. John can't see. VP
- b. * John can't to see. IP
- c. * John can't a man NP
- d. * John can't in the room. PP

It follows from this that modal auxiliaries do not assign partitive Case. We now have an explanation for the data in (107). Further evidence that supports this analysis comes from the following data. There are cases where a NI sentence involves **be** and the expletive is still not allowed to appear. That is even when **be** appears, sometimes its presence is not enough to allow the expletive to appear.

(110)

- a. Can't nobody be in the room.
- b. Can't be nobody in the room.
- c. * There can't nobody be in the room.
- d. There can't be nobody in the room.

In (110c and d), there is a slight difference which determines whether the expletive can appear or not. In (110c), when **be** is to the right of the post-auxiliary subject, the sentence is ungrammatical, while on the other hand, (110d) is grammatical when **be** is to the left of the subject. This seems to suggest that what allows the expletive to appear depends on whether **be** is positioned to the left or to the right of subject.

Taking into account Case assignment, in (110d), we can assume that **can't** is the head of AGR_S and with **there** in Spec AGR_S it has a Spec-head relation with it. Also, the fact that **nobody** is internal says that the associate is assigned partitive Case. The same should hold true for (110c). **Can't** being the negative auxiliary is the head of AGR_{SP} which is in Spec-head agreement with the expletive **there** in Spec AGR_S where Case is assigned. However, for (110c), **nobody** is to the left of **be**. Though the subject is still internal to VP, it appears that **can't** is not a Case assigning verb. On the other hand, if **be** were assigning Case to **nobody**, (110c) should be grammatical given that both the expletive NP and the NP **nobody** would be assigned Case independently. Since the **be** in (110c) does not assign Case to **nobody** we can assume that **nobody** like the subject of infinitive clauses must raise at LF to be assigned Case.

However, unlike subjects of infinitive clauses, the associate does not raise to AGR_O , nor it is in the Spec AGR_S of an embedded clause. In existential sentences, the associate is in complement position of VP. Unlike the subjects of infinitive clauses, the associate, because it is not in a nominative position, cannot raise to AGR_O . If the associate were to raise to AGR_O there would be no way for an object to get Case. What distinguishes the associate is the fact that it is assigned partitive Case. Partitive Case is a lexical property which is only assigned by certain verbs and under government by the Case assigning head. This explains the contrast between (110c and d) which appear here as (111).

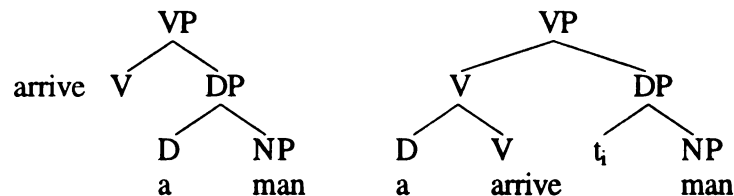
(111)

- a. * There can't nobody be in the room.
- b. There can't be nobody in the room.

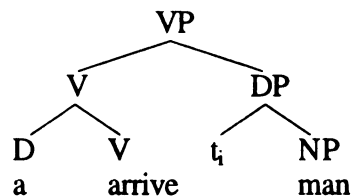
Munn (1996) has argued, that head government is still needed in minimalism. Therefore, the simplest way to account for partitive is by government. Though minimalism has eliminated government, I will assume that something like government is

needed to assign partitive Case. Alternatively, I assume that partitive Case is assigned by LF incorporation of the head of DP into the Case assigning verb as illustrated in (112).

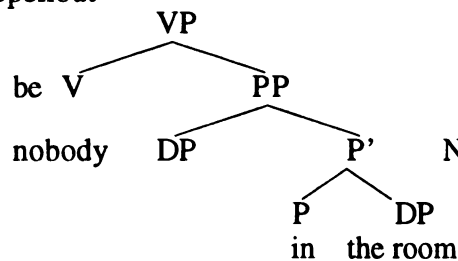
(112) a. SpellOut



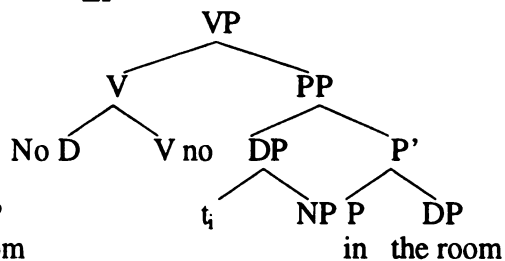
LF



b. Spellout



LF



In (112a and b), at PF the verb takes DP as an argument. At LF the incorporation is established by the raising of the determiner head of DP to the Case assigning verb which is the head of VP. This incorporation allows partitive Case to be assigned to the associate.

Given the fact that modals can't assign partitive Case, Case cannot be assigned to **nobody** in (110c). However, the fact that **nobody** is internal to VP but is not governed by **be** indicates that it is not assigned partitive Case.

Based on Lasnik's argument that the expletive and its associate need Case, I conclude that (110c) is ungrammatical because the associate cannot receive partitive Case from the verb **be**. In sentences where the associate is preceded by the negative modal, partitive Case cannot be assigned from the modal verb nor from the verb **be** which follows it as shown in (110c). In order to receive Case, the associate must move to the Spec of AGR_S at LF. However, when the expletive appears, as in (110c), AGR_S is filled and Case

has already been assigned to it. Since **there** already occupies Spec AGR_S, the associate cannot move at LF.

In summary, the reason why expletives cannot appear in NI sentences involving modals stands on the fact that modals do not assign partitive Case. Like subjects of an infinitive clause, these associates must raise at LF in order to be assigned Case. However, when the expletive appears in the Spec of AGR_S, it fills the only available Case position that the associate can raise to.

3.4. Individual Level predicates in NI Sentences

Above, I have argued the expletive cannot appear in certain NI sentences because it occupies the only position where its associate must raise in order to get Case at LF. In NI sentences involving Individual Level predicates, I will argue that the same condition applies.

Weldon argues for inversion in instances where the post auxiliary subject is an individual level predicate. She bases her argument on the fact that the expletive cannot appear in NI sentences containing individual level predicates.

(113)

- a. Ain't nobody a man
- b. * There ain't nobody a man.

However, there is evidence that from Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese which suggests that individual level predicates need Case. Schmitt (1996) shows that **ser** is a copula verb which is equivalent to the English copula **be** that takes on individual level predicates, while on the other hand the copula **estar** chooses a stage level predicate. Furthermore, Schmitt shows that individual level predicates are [+N] small clauses which differ from stage level predicates which are [+V] small clauses. Schmitt argues that [+v]

clauses and [+N] clauses assign Case to their arguments in different ways. Schmitt argues that since **estar**, unlike **ser**, only subcategorizes for AP and PP but not NP, that individual level predicates need to be assigned Case as (114) shows.

(114)

- a. Pedro é cozinheiro **ser**
 Pedro is (a) cook. (That is his profession)
- b. * Pedro esta cozinheiro. **estar**
 Pedro is cook.
- c. Pedro esta de cozinheiro. **estar**
 Pedro is of cook.
 (Pedro is playing the role of a cook today because the real one didn't come)

(Schmitt 1996 p. 412 ex. 72)

Following Schmitt's argument, in NI constructions involving individual level predicates, Case must be assigned to both the predicate and the subject NP. Therefore, as in the above cases, when the expletive appears in NI constructions, it occupies the only Case position that the individual level predicate can raise to. Thus, in NI sentences containing individual level predicates, the expletive cannot appear because either the associate or the individual level predicate, must raise at LF to be assigned Case.

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have shown that expletives in AAE NI sentences containing modals cannot appear due to Case. In NI sentences containing modal auxiliaries and Individual level predicates, I argue that when the expletive appears it blocks the associate and the individual level predicate from raising at LF to get Case. I first showed that NPs in general need Case and that the expletive and its associate are assigned Case by independent Case assigners. Second, I showed that modal auxiliaries cannot take on NP arguments. In addition, the fact that NI sentences must obey the definiteness restriction provides further

evidence that the negative auxiliary does not undergo inversion. Third, I conclude that the associate that is preceded by a modal auxiliary is not assigned Case since the modal cannot take on NP arguments. Last, I argue that the associate must raise at LF in order to be assigned Case, and when the expletive appears movement is blocked.

In NI sentences involving Individual Level predicates, I show following Schmitt (1996) that it also lacks Case. Like the associate that is preceded by a modal verb, the Individual Level Predicate must also raise at LF to be assigned Case. When the expletive appears in these cases, it blocks movement at LF.

CONCLUSION

Looking at the work done previously on AAE NI sentences, the debate has gone back and forth in determining if two analyses are needed . The two competing theories base their arguments on whether an overt expletive can appear or not, and on the fact that all NI sentences adhere to definiteness restriction. Those supporting that two analyses are needed argue that inversion occur in instances where the negative auxiliary is a modal and the expletive cannot appear. Supporters of a single analysis hold on to the fact that the definiteness restriction rule requires its subject to be indefinite.

When considering the two approaches, it has become clear that one would have to ignore either the definiteness restriction or that fact that expletives cannot appear in sentences with modal auxiliaries. As a result, Labov, Sells et al., and Weldon, argue that NI sentences require two analyses, but ignore the effects of the definiteness restriction. Martin argues that NI sentences are existential due to definiteness restriction, and ignores the fact that the expletive does not appear in NI sentences containing modals.

I have proposed an analysis that encompasses both the definiteness restriction and non-expletive sentences. NI sentence are not inversion constructions because NI sentences of SE do not follow the definiteness effect. I also showed that if inversion truly occurs in NI sentences, it is ungrammatical when embedded in wh-clauses. This analysis argues that what enables the expletive to appear is determined by **be**'s ability to assign Case to the post-auxiliary subject. The examples demonstrate that existential **be** is generated in a position where it is either preceded by the initial auxiliary or by the post-auxiliary subject. Furthermore it was determined that when **be** governed the post-auxiliary subject the expletive could appear. This discovery then lead to the fact that when **be** follows the post-auxiliary subject, it is not enough to allow the expletive to appear.

Lasnik's study on existential sentences, illustrates that the expletive subject and its associate are assigned Case independently. The auxiliary assigns nominative Case to the expletive subject and **be** or an unaccusative verb assigns partitive Case to its associate. As a result, at PF the expletive and its associate have Case assignments that are independent of each other. Therefore in NI constructions, I conclude that the expletive cannot appear in cases involving a modal since modals cannot take on NPs and they cannot assign partitive Case. Therefore, the associate cannot raise at LF to be assigned Case and when the expletive appears. This allows all NI constructions to be given a single analysis.

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