

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2020.21.1.26>**ЗНАЧЕНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ВВОДНОГО *THERE* И ВАРЬИРОВАНИЕ БЫТИЙНЫХ ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЙ В ДИСКУРСЕ**

Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

В настоящем исследовании ставится цель выявить факторы варьирования бытийных предложений в инаугурационных речах американских президентов. Предложения, сообщающие о наличии трудностей и проблем, стоящих перед обществом, имеют в качестве своей основы, главным образом, два типа семантико-синтаксических моделей: (1) синтаксические структуры с личным подлежащим и сказуемым, выраженным глаголом *have* или контекстуально соотносимыми с этим глаголом предикатами (*We have / experience / face / confront problems*), включая перцептивные глаголы (*We see / experience difficulties*) и (2) бытийные конструкции с вводным подлежащим *there* (*There are problems*). Проводимый в работе анализ факторов выбора одного из типов конструкций в высказывании о ситуации бытия либо наличия опирается на языковые примеры, извлеченные методом сплошной выборки из десяти текстов инаугурационных обращений американских президентов в период с 1981 по 2017 годы. Как свидетельствуют языковые данные, выбор высказывания определяется, главным образом, когнитивным содержанием, передаваемым подлежащим предложения в конкретном дискурсивном контексте. В исследовании показано, что личное подлежащее в высказываниях наличия и вводное подлежащее в бытийных высказываниях дифференцируются в качестве номинаций концептуальных архетипов «участник» и «экспериментальная область», соответственно. Разграничение участника (У) и экспериментальной области (О) по их функциональным характеристикам отражается в дифференциации когнитивных структур, в которые они входят: фрейма события и экспериментальной схемы, соответственно. Актуализация упомянутых концептуальных архетипов в рамках данных когнитивных структур мотивирует, с одной стороны, выбор бытийного предложения и, с другой стороны, выбор речевой стратегии сообщения о соответствующей бытийной ситуации.

**Ключевые слова:** дискурс; высказывание; конструкция; подлежащее; концептуальный архетип; когнитивная структура; речевая стратегия.

**THE MEANING OF ENGLISH ANTICIPATORY *THERE* AND ALTERNATIONS OF EXISTENTIAL SENTENCES IN DISCOURSE**

Research article

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**Abstract**

The proposed study aims to reveal the motivations for alternative uses of existential sentences in inaugural speeches of American presidents. Sentences that state the existence of different kinds of difficulties and problems faced by a society, are based mainly on two types of semantico-syntactic models: (1) syntactic structures with personal subjects and predicates expressed by the verb *have* or some other semantically and contextually correlative verbs (*We have / experience / face / confront problems*), including perceptual predicates (*We see / experience difficulties*) and (2) existential clauses headed by anticipatory *there* (*There are problems*). The suggested analysis of the factors that motivate the choice of one of the construction types in utterances about existential situations is based on examples drawn from ten texts of inaugural addresses of American presidents within the time period from 1981 to 2017. As evidenced by linguistic data, the choice of a respective utterance is motivated mainly by the cognitive content conveyed by a particular clausal subject in a discourse context. The study shows that personal and anticipatory subjects of the correlative clauses are distinguished as units of naming the conceptual archetypes «participant» and «experiential region», respectively. The differentiation of the participant (P) and experiential region (R) according to their functional properties is reflected in the distinction of cognitive structures that the participant and experiential region are involved in: an event frame and experiential scheme, respectively. The evocation of the mentioned conceptual archetypes as parts of their cognitive structures motivates, on the one hand, the choice of existential sentences and, on the other hand, the choice of a speech strategy for the description of a particular existential situation.

**Keywords:** discourse; utterance; construction; clausal subject; conceptual archetype; cognitive structure; speech strategy.

**Introduction**

Existential sentences that describe a variety of the most general situations of being and having are frequently used in different kinds of discourses [1], [5]. This pertains to political discourse [6] represented, in particular, by presidential inaugural speeches. Existential sentences in such speeches reflect problems and challenges faced by a society at the moment of election. In English there are three main types of constructions that are involved in existential statements: (a) syntactic structures with personal subjects and predicates expressed by the verb *have* or its contextual synonyms: *We have / experience / face / confront problems*; (b) clauses with perceptual verbs: *We see / experience difficulties*; (c) existential clauses with anticipatory *there*: *There are problems*.

The mentioned constructions are often used alternatively. For instance, the utterances below equally describe the existence of a great deal of work that has to be done in order to overcome the current difficulties and problems. However, whereas in the first example the existential situation is described by a clause with a personal subject (*we*), in the second one a similar state of existence is reflected in a clause with anticipatory *there*: *My friends, we have work to do* (Bush 1989) [13]; *For everywhere we look, there is work to be done* (Obama 2009) [13].

The following example illustrates alternations of clauses with anticipatory *there* and clauses headed by personal subjects (*you*): *Those who say that we're in a time when there are no heroes, they just don't know where to look. You can see heroes every day going in and out of factory gates. Others, a handful in number, produce enough food to feed all of us and then the world beyond. You meet heroes across a counter, and they're on both sides of that counter. There are entrepreneurs with faith in themselves and faith in an idea who create new jobs, new wealth and opportunity* (Reagan 1981) [13].

Alternations of existential sentences in the above examples raise a question about the factors for choosing one type of construction over another one. Since the alternating constructions involve the obvious correlations of anticipatory *there* and personal subjects, the question could be answered by addressing the aspects of meaning of existential *there* that make it correlative with typical referring expressions like personal pronouns.

It is generally assumed in descriptive grammars [14], [7], [9], [8] that anticipatory *there* is a purely structural clausal element, devoid of any semantic content. Existential sentences with this element are mostly treated as a whole (as in [4], [10]), without any special focus on the semantic contribution of each particular clausal constituent to the general meaning expressed.

With this in view, the general orientation of this study is directed towards the identification of the discursive value of anticipatory *there* that is revealed through the element's regular correlations with meaningful clausal constituents and/or referring expressions.

#### Data and theoretical prerequisites of the study

The subsequent analysis of linguistic data is based on examples drawn from ten texts of inaugural speeches delivered by US presidents over the period from 1981 to 2017 [13]. The number of examples is over 70 utterances that include both existential sentences with anticipatory *there* and correlative clauses with personal subjects.

Theoretically, the paper takes up three basic assumptions of cognitive linguistics: (1) R. Langacker's statement on the meaningful nature of all linguistic items independently of the language level they belong to (lexicon or grammar) [11]; (2) the assumption on the discursive emergence and structuring of meaning throughout the acts of designation and predication, as shown in E. Kubryakova's research [2], [3]; (3) the statement about the possibility of using a lingual unit to evoke a conceptual archetype as a type of cognitive structure [12, P. 9].

As suggested in Langacker's conception of cognitive grammar [12, P. 24], conceptual archetypes represent cognitive entities which "in the mental sphere ... include the experience of perceiving, of thinking, and of feeling emotions". Among the basic conceptual archetypes encoded in English the author singles out "participant" and "setting" [12, P. 67 – 71]. A setting is regarded as a global expanse of space or time. Alongside typical locative and temporal settings Langacker posits "abstract settings", or mental expanses associated with areas of mental activity activated in different discourse contexts. By contrast with settings, participants are treated as entities (people or physical objects) that occupy locative and temporal settings, that may evoke certain abstract (mental) settings and that are engaged in relationships constituting events or situations.

In terms of Langacker's participant-setting distinction, the above mentioned alternations of existential sentences with anticipatory *there* and clauses with personal subjects can be treated as representing a discourse-driven variation between two types of conceptual content signified in the initial clausal position: an abstract setting and participant, respectively.

The subsequent analysis of linguistic data will show that abstract setting, further called "region" or "experiential region", makes the basis of discursively structured meaning of anticipatory *there*. It will also be shown that the conceptual distinctions between regions (R) and participants (P) as two types of conceptual archetypes underlies, on the one hand, the choices between existential sentences with R- and P-subjects (anticipatory *there* and personal subjects, respectively) and, on the other hand, motivates speech strategies chosen by the speaker in discourse.

The paper will follow the following sequence of analysis. First, clauses with R- and P-subjects will be characterized in terms of the conceptually relevant features of regions and participants. Second, the paper will identify wider conceptual structures (such as frames and schemes) that are activated in discourse in uses of existential sentences and correlative clauses.

#### Discussion and results

The participant-region distinction in discourse presupposes the attribution of different properties to the respective conceptual archetypes. Thus, P-subjects typically collocate with predicates that describe actions or states of the subjects' referents. This explains frequent extensions of predications with such subjects through modal verbs in their root meanings, cf.: *We know we have to face hard truths and take strong steps, but we have not done so; instead, we have drifted* (Clinton 1993) [13]; *We will face challenges. We will confront hardships. But we will get the job done* (Trump 2017) [13].

On the other hand, when similar existential situations are described in clauses with anticipatory *there* that refers to an experiential region modal extensions of predicates involve the expression of epistemic modality, cf.: *There should be no fear – we are protected, and we will always be protected* (Trump 2017) [13].

Different kinds of modality that appear to be felicitous with predicates of P- vs. S-subjects is related to the distinction in the functioning of nominal and verbal groups in respective utterances. Thus, utterances with existential *there* that invite epistemic modality would focus on the content that "fills" the experiential region (*there*). This entails the possibility of enumeration effected through the use of nominal groups in a clause: *There is work to do, work that Government alone cannot do: teaching children to read, hiring people off welfare rolls, coming out from behind locked doors and shuttered windows to help reclaim our streets from drugs and gangs and crime, taking time out of our own lives to serve others* (Clinton 1997) [13].

By contrast, utterances with P-subjects, frequently associated with root modality and characterizing the inner properties of the referents in question would focus on the actions of those referents and thus would invite the elaboration of verbal rather

than nominal groups. Illustrative in this respect is the following example: *We have a deficit to bring down. We have more will than wallet, but will is what we need* (Bush 1989) [13].

The distinction between nominal vs. verbal orientedness of existential utterances with R- vs. P-subjects, respectively, bears directly on the differences that the utterances display in terms of the inner semantic relationships between their structural constituents. Thus, the relationship between anticipatory *there* and (predicatively used) nominal phrases evoke a link between the field of perceptual or mental apprehension and the focus of attention. By contrast, the collocation of a personal subject with its predicate evokes a subject-object relationship. For example, the use of an existential sentence with anticipatory *there* followed by the construction with a P-subject in the fragment below illustrates the transition from the focus on the problem itself (“divisiveness” in the Congress) to the direct statement on what particular phenomena and events (objects) could be observed by citizens of the country (subjects): *For Congress, too, has changed in our time. **There** has grown a certain divisiveness. We have seen **the hard looks** and heard the statements in which not each other's ideas are challenged but each other's motives* (Bush 1989) [13].

The activation of the link “field of apprehension – focus of attention” in uses of sentences with R-subjects encourages the speech strategy of static descriptions. A variety of salience effects is produced when the focus of attention is directed towards different kinds of entities (including people) and phenomena, in particular:

(a) definite entities when their existence is regarded as relevant by the speaker: ***There** are those in the world who scorn our vision of human dignity and freedom* (Reagan 1985) [13];

(b) indefinite entities that draw the speaker's attention: *Now, **there** are some who question the scale of our ambitions – who suggest that our system cannot tolerate too many big plans* (Obama 2009) [13];

(c) the absence of anyone or anything from a class that is regarded as highly relevant: ***There's** no story more heartening in our history than the progress that we've made toward the brotherhood of man that God intended for us. Let us resolve there will be no turning back or hesitation on the road to an America rich in dignity and abundant with opportunity for all our citizens* (Reagan 1985) [13];

(d) the presence of only one entity in a class that is construed as highly significant: ***There** is only one way safely and legitimately to reduce the cost of national security, and that is to reduce the need for it* (Reagan 1985) [Presidential speeches]; ***There** is only one force of history that can break the reign of hatred and resentment, and expose the pretensions of tyrants, and reward the hopes of the decent and tolerant, and that is the force of human freedom* (Bush 2005) [13].

The descriptive strategy realized in uses of sentences with anticipatory *there* can be distinguished from the reporting strategy that frequently motivates the uses of clauses with P-subjects. The subject-object-relationship evoked by this type of clauses boosts the dynamicity of oral speech. As shown in the example below, the choice of a P-subject construction (*if we meet this challenge*) instead of a possible existential clause (*if there is a challenge of this kind*), contributes to the construal of the described existential situation as a confrontational one: *And if **we** meet this challenge, these will be years when Americans have restored their confidence and tradition of progress; when our values of faith, family, work, and neighborhood were restated for a modern age ...* (Reagan 1985) [13].

The dynamic construal of clauses with P-subjects can also be related to the fact that such clauses evoke **an event frame** in which the event as such is designated by a verb phrase, while the slots of the frame are filled with nominal and adverbial phrases. An event frame typically has a temporal slot that can encode different shades of temporal meanings. Thus, the following sentence with a P-subject (*we*) has its temporal slot filled with a phrase that indicates a temporal duration (*for decades*): *For decades **we** have piled deficit upon deficit, mortgaging our future and our children's future for the temporary convenience of the present* (Reagan 1981) [13].

Temporal slots appear to be peripheral in cognitive structures activated by existential clauses with R-subjects. The most frequent adverbials that do occur in such clauses are those of frequency, as in the following example: *But we, the present-day Americans, are not given to looking backward. In this blessed land, **there** is always a better tomorrow* (Reagan 1985) [13].

The nature of adverbials used in sentences with R-subjects presupposes that existential sentences are associated with **experiential schemes** rather than event-frames. The constituents of existential constructions have the following correspondences with the elements of an experiential scheme: anticipatory *there* points to an activated experiential region, an existential verb designates the state of becoming, being or existence, and a (predicatively used) nominal phrase refers to an entity or event whose existence is stated. The experiential scheme presupposes a holistic construal of the described existential situation without its precise temporal location. This explains frequent uses of existential clauses with generic temporal reference, as in the following example: *Where **there** is suffering, **there** is duty* (Bush 2001) [13]. On the contrary, when a similar existential situation is described by a sentence with a P-subject, it is an event frame which is activated. This implies a more specific temporal reference: *When **we** see that wounded traveler on the road to Jericho, we will not pass to the other side* (Bush 2001) [13].

### Conclusion

As shown in the conducted analysis of linguistic data, alternations of sentences with anticipatory *there* and clauses with personal subjects are motivated by factors of cognitive-discursive nature. In actual discourse, English anticipatory *there* functions as a meaningful item that designates an experiential region representing a type of conceptual archetype. This makes the introductory clausal element correlative with a personal subject representing in turn a participant as another conceptual archetype. Experiential regions and participants have distinct conceptual features that are reflected in contrastive uses of the analyzed existential clauses. Besides, both conceptual archetypes are integrated in wider cognitive structures. Whereas an experiential region makes part of an experiential scheme as an internalized cognitive structure, a participant is a constituent of an event frame. The paper has shown that alternations of existential sentences headed by R- and P-subjects reflect the distinctions between regions and participants as constituents of experiential schemes and event frames, respectively.

**Конфликт интересов**

Не указан.

**Conflict of Interest**

None declared.

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