

# Specificational *it*- and *there*-clefts with quantified NPs as value

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# Introduction

# TYPOLGY OF SPECIFICATIONAL *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

	<i>it</i> -clefts	<i>there</i> -clefts
<b>Specifying</b> instances satisfying variable	<i>It's <b>Chirac</b> who's going to carry the political can</i>	<i>There's <b>John</b> who's building a new one.</i>
	<b>Identifying</b>	<b>Enumerating</b>
<b>Quantifying</b> instantiation satisfying variable	<i>It's <b>three</b> that are not here.</i>	<i>There's <b>at least three</b> that do not work.</i>
	<b>Quantifying</b>	<b>Quantifying</b>

# TYPOLGY OF SPECIFICATIONAL *IT-* AND *THERE-*CLEFTS

	<i>it</i> -clefts	<i>there</i> -clefts
<b>Specifying</b> instances satisfying variable	<p><i>It's <b>Chirac</b> who's going to carry the political can</i></p> <p>generally recognized</p>	<p><i>There's <b>John</b> who's building a new one.</i></p> <p>recognized by Halliday 1967, Hannay 1985, Lambrecht 2001, but not by Huddleston &amp; Pullum 2002</p>
<b>Quantifying</b> instantiation satisfying variable	<p><i>It's <b>at least three</b> that are not here.</i></p> <p>little attention, but not contested</p>	<p><i>There's <b>at least three</b> that do not work.</i></p> <p>recognized only by Davidse 1999, 2000, &amp; Kimps 2016</p>

# AIMS OF PRESENTATION

1. Show that the two types of specificational *it*- and *there*-clefts, including the overlooked quantifying *there*-clefts, have the same
  - functional (semantic and information structural) features
  - formal (grammatical and prosodic) features
2. Verify – or falsify – the hypothesis, inspired by Milsark (1977), that
  - postverbal NPs in quantifying *it*-clefts take absolute and relative quantifiers
  - postverbal NPs in quantifying *there*-clefts take only absolute quantifiers
  - ❖ absolute quantifiers: *three, many, a lot, few, etc.*
  - ❖ relative quantifiers: *most, all, each, every, etc.*



1. Specificational it- and there-clefts:  
shared functional and formal features

# **SPECIFICATIONAL *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS**

**1. Semantics**

**2. Information structure**

**3. Prosody**

**4. Grammar**



# SPECIFICATIONAL *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

## SEMANTICS

### B. Enumerating specificational *there*-clefts

- enumerate **value**, *John*, satisfying **variable**, ‘x who’s just building a new one’
- Without exhaustiveness implicature (‘John among others’) (Halliday 1967)

A: I’ve really just got to fill them in on lexicographers’ needs just because we’ve been doing a lot of it but there’s other people that you think are doing kind of creative corpus lexicography.

B: Well, there’s [**John**] [**who’s just building a new one**]. (WB\_BrSp)

**value**                      **variable**

# SPECIFICATIONAL *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

## SEMANTICS

### C. Quantifying specificational *it*-clefts:

- quantify **values**, *all Christians*, satisfying **variable**, 'x who say Merry Christmas'

Merry Christmas was, is and always will be a part of the Catholic greetings for Christmas. – It's not just Catholics, it's [**all Christians**] [**who say Merry Christmas**]. (Google)

**value**

**variable**

# SPECIFICATIONAL *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

## SEMANTICS

### D. Quantifying specificational *there*-clefts

- quantify **values**, *nothing*, satisfying **variable**, 'x that's not working'

Nothing has crashed. Don't worry.

There's [**nothing**] [**that's not working**]. (WB)

value

variable



# SPECIFICATIONAL *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

## INFORMATION STRUCTURE

A: ... there's other people that you think are doing kind of creative corpus lexicography.

B: Well, there's [**John**] [who's just building a new one]. (WB\_BrSp)  
focus pragmatically presupposed

Merry Christmas was, is and always will be a part of the Catholic greetings for Christmas. – It's not just Catholics, it's [**all Christians**] [who say Merry Christmas]. (Google)

Nothing has crashed. Don't worry. There's [**nothing**] [that's not working]. (WB\_BrSp)

## SPECIFICATIONAL *IT-* AND *THERE-*CLEFTS

# PROSODY

- information focus status of value NP prosodically realized by **tonic prominence**, i.e. pitch change (Halliday 1967,1985)
- according to British tradition of prosodic transcription, the cleft relative clause/variable can form a postnuclear tail (2), the second part of a compound tone (1,4), or a distinct tone unit of its own (3)

# SPECIFICATIONAL *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

## PROSODY

### (1) identifying *it*-cleft

*it is "^\th\eir 'credi'bility that`s in qu/estion# (LLC)*



### (2) quantifying *it*-cleft

*it`s ^just 'one !q\uestion they have to do # (LLC)*



### (3) enumerating *there*-cleft

*^\and there is "!\H\erman# - who is ^\also 'known# (LLC)*



### (4) quantifying *there*-cleft

*per^haps there was : \one who didn`t l/ecture# (LCC)*



# SPECIFICATIONAL *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

## PROSODY

Kimps (2016) hypothesizes:

value typically prosodically marked as **primary information focus** of whole cleft cxn, i.e. mostly the cleft relative clause/variable contains information foci as well,

**but** tonic prominence of value NP involves

- **greater** intensity
- **greater** pitch range

# SPECIFICATIONAL *IT-* AND *THERE-*CLEFTS

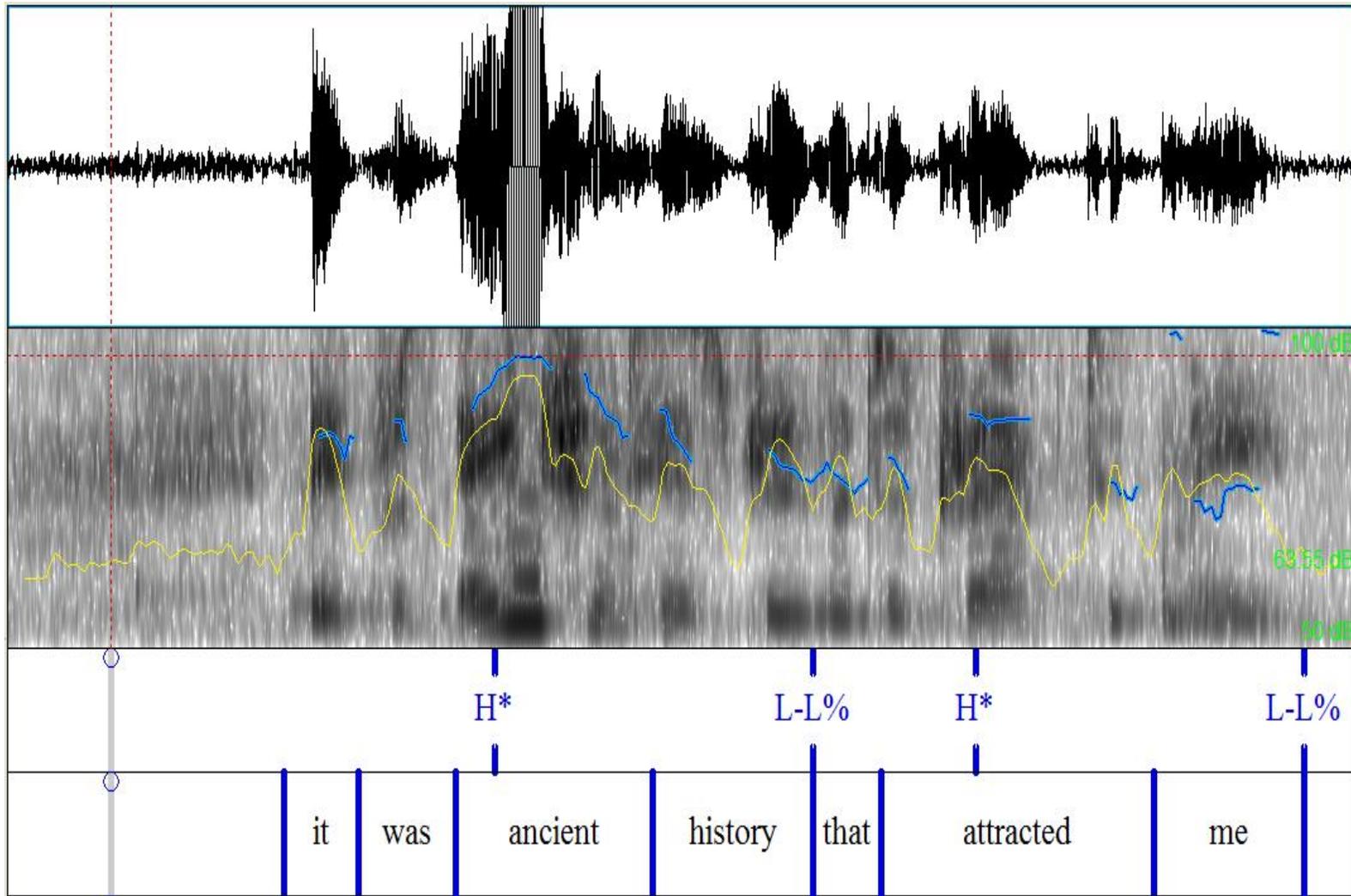
## PROSODY

Proving this hypothesis will require

- developing Esser's (1980) point that information foci are arranged hierarchically (p.c. O'Grady)
- studying prosody instrumentally, rather than relying on transcriptions that represent all pitch changes marking focus indiscriminately,
  - e.g. [is there staff that's known?] // ^and there is **"!H\erman** // who is **^also** 'known // (LLC:2.6)
  - ⇒ differences in intensity and pitch range between two foci not brought out by transcription

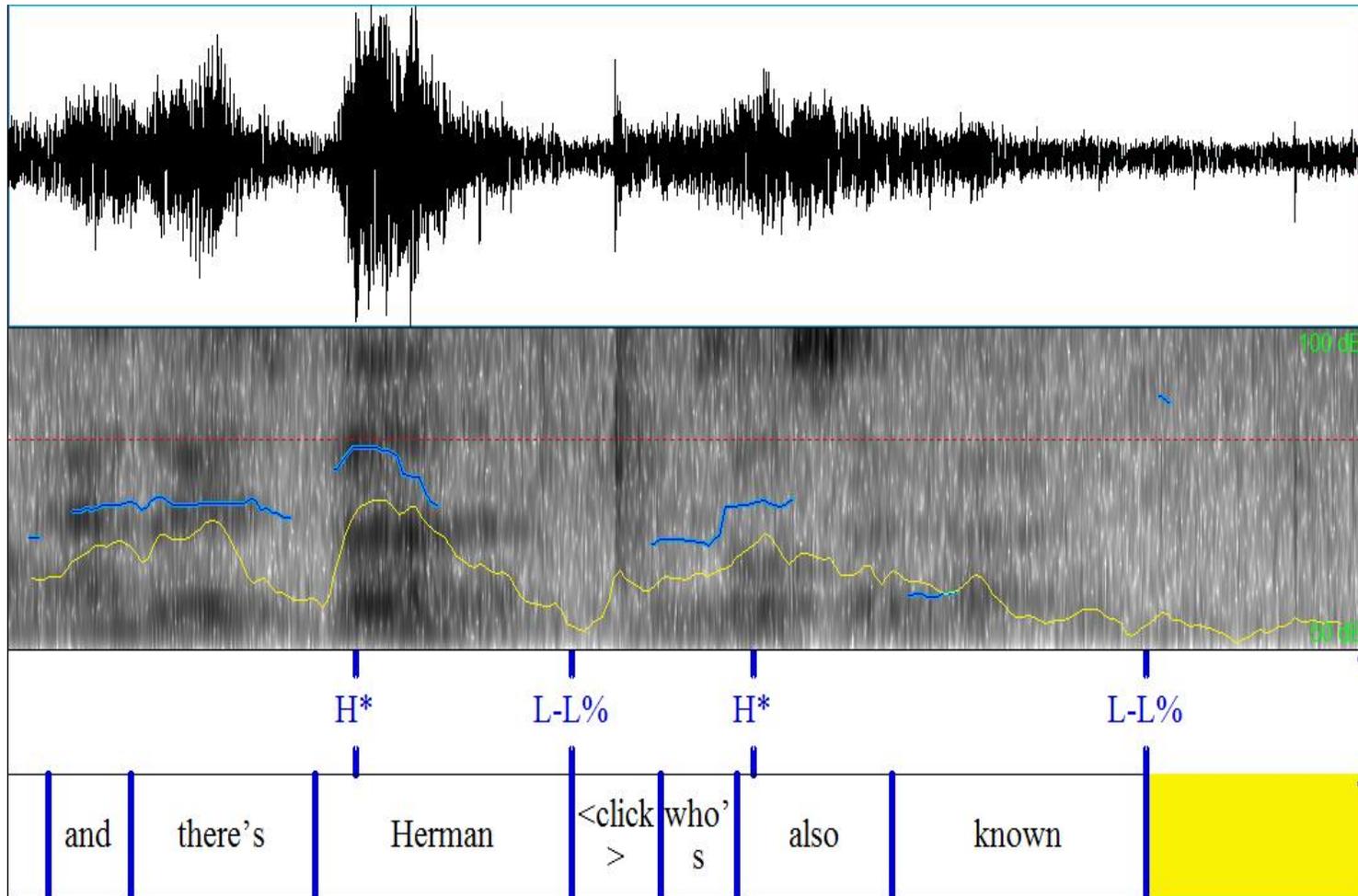
# SPECIFICATIONAL *IT-* AND *THERE-*CLEFTS

## PROSODY



# SPECIFICATIONAL *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

## PROSODY



# SPECIFICATIONAL *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

## GRAMMAR

Specificational clefts	Restrictive relative clauses
<b>whole</b> postverbal NP as antecedent of cleft relative clause	only head noun as antecedent
relative with subject function can be <b>zero</b>	cannot have zero as subject relative [all the [houses that/* $\emptyset$ require attention]]

**Id. *it*-cleft:** He's lovely, **he hasn't done much**. It's [other people around him] [ $\emptyset$  have done things that have blown me away]. (Google)

**En. *there*-cleft:** Now you 've got a fair sort of permanent staff now. There's [Fred] [ $\emptyset$  has been there for years]. (WB)

**Qu. *it*-cleft:** A: They 've done all those up and erm but ... I don't know whether it's just council houses ...

B: Mm as far as I 'm aware I think it's [all the houses that require attention ] [ $\emptyset$  are being done] (WB)

**Qu. *there*-cleft:** as long as you paid it you see. ... there's [a lot of people ] [ $\emptyset$  didn't pay it] (WB)

## SPECIFICATIONAL *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

# CONCLUSION

All types of specificational *it*- and *there*-clefts share the same distinctive features at levels of

1. Semantics
2. Information structure
3. Prosody
4. Grammar



## 2. Absolute and relative quantifiers in it-clefts and there-clefts

# ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE QUANTIFIERS IN *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

## DIFFERENCES?

Are there any differences between quantifying *it*- and *there*-clefts?

Are there different selection restrictions on quantifier types?

e.g. *all* is possible in *it*-clefts, but seems at first sight impossible in *there*-clefts

If confirmed, does impossibility of *there*-clefts to quantify over total presupposed set (by *all*) mirror non-exhaustiveness implicature of enumerating *there*-clefts?

*Merry Christmas* was, is and always will be a part of the Catholic greetings for Christmas.

It's not just Catholics, it's all Christians who *say Merry Christmas*.

There's not just Catholics, \*there's all Christians who *say Merry Christmas*.

# ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE QUANTIFIERS IN *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

## LITERATURE

### Absolute quantifiers

### Relative quantifiers

**MILSARK  
&  
FOLLOWERS**

‘cardinal quantifiers’ (Milsark 1977: 23)

express **size**, translateable into cardinal value, of set of entities denoted by head noun

*We found three / a few / a hundred / many dead mice in the shed.*

‘strong quantifiers’ (Milsark 1977: 22)

“must always be understood **with reference to a set**”  
cannot be translated into a cardinal value without knowledge of the cardinality of the set to which they refer

*Most mice in the shed are still alive.*

**LANGACKER  
(1991)**

specify “**cardinality**” (86) or “**size**” (82) of some *mass* (designated by singular or plural count N or mass N), by **directly measuring it against** cardinal or more non-specific **scale**

“make a quantitative assessment **relative to a reference mass**”; compare actually designated to reference mass (83)

# ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE QUANTIFIERS IN *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

## LITERATURE

**Milsark (1977):** in non-enumerating simple existential clauses:

- restriction on determiners of existent NP to the effect that they have to convey **absolute** quantification
- they signify a **quantity** (Milsark 1977: 9)
  - either **specific** in the case of cardinal numbers such as *two, three, five*
  - or **vague** in the case of indefinite quantifiers such as *a few, some, many*

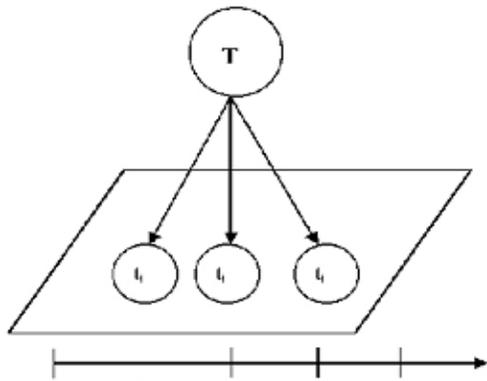
*Is there **a** god?*

*There had been  $\emptyset$  doubters among the followers of the man Jesus. (WB)*

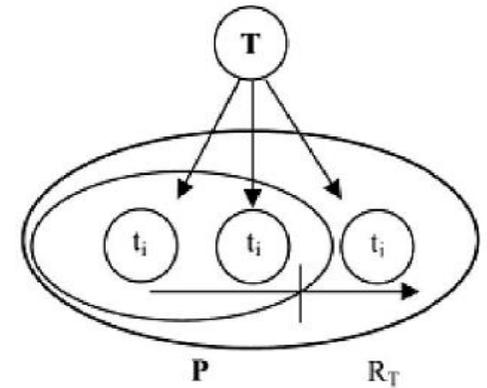
*There were **two** usherettes in the foyer (WB)*

*There are **some** glasses in the dining room. (WB)*

*In pre-European times, there were **no** large cities in the north. (WB)*



# Quantification

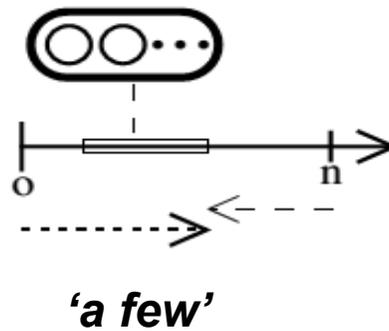
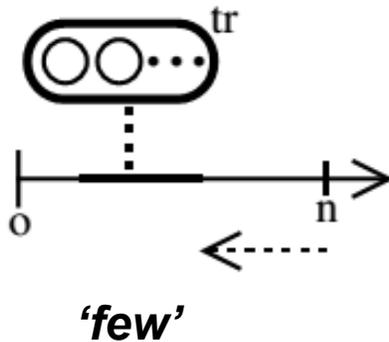


## Absolute

gives a direct measure of the designated mass  
e.g. *few, many/much, five*  
etc.

## Relative

compares the size of the actually designated mass to a reference mass  
e.g. *all, some, most, etc.*



# ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE QUANTIFIERS IN *IT*- AND *THERE*-CLEFTS

## RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

### Research Question:

Which quantifier types are possible in *it*- and *there*-clefts?

**Hypothesis:**

- quantifying *it*-clefts take absolute and relative quantifiers
- quantifying *there*-clefts take only absolute quantifiers

will be verified / falsified by

1. account of quantifier types in random samples of *it*- and *there*-clefts
2. exhaustive searches on *all* (universal relative quantifier) and *most* (non-universal relative quantifier) in samples of *it*-clefts and *there*-clefts in Wordbanks



## 2.1. Quantifier types in random samples of it- and there-clefts

# 1. *THERE-CLEFTS*

## DATA

- British English, American English and Australian English
- spoken and written mode
- random samples of 1000 tokens of *there*-clefts extracted on:
  - existential *there* + *be*\* (Budts et al 2013)
  - no relative markers specified in query because zero subject relative a feature of clefts

*WordbanksOnline*

*brnews*: 19

*usnews*: 64

*oznews*: 30

*brspok*: 59

*usspok*: 58

*Griffith Corpus of Spoken Australian English*: 67

⇒ total dataset of *there*-clefts: 297 tokens

# 1. *THERE-CLEFTS*

## RESULTS

- **Enumerative there-clefts: 5/297 or 1.7%**

*in the old days people used to talk blithely about data viruses there's actually no such thing as 'a data virus'. there is 'a software virus' that's an acceptable term or 'a computer virus' or 'a program virus' but certainly never ever 'a data virus' (WB Br\_Sp)*

⇒ **marked option**

- **Quantifying there-clefts: 292/297 or 98.3%**

*A: ...as long as you paid it you see.*

*B: Mm. Do you think women got in trouble with them as well.*

*A: Well, there's a lot of people you know Ø didn't pay it. (WB Br\_Sp)*

⇒ **unmarked option**

# 1. *THERE-CLEFTS*

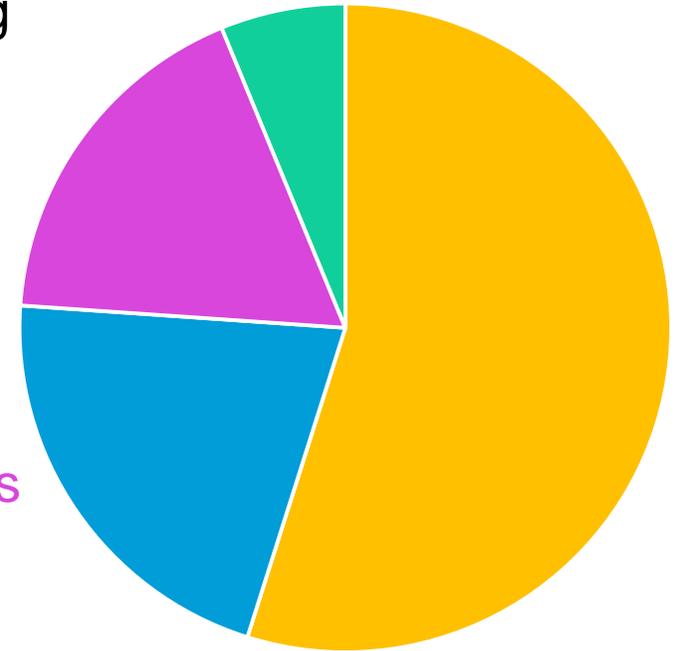
## RESULTS

- **Quantifying there-clefts:** 292/297 or 98.3%
- **non-specific absolute quantifiers** e.g. *nothing, somebody, lots of, many, few*  
*A: ...as long as you paid it you see. B: Mm. Do you think women got in trouble with them as well. A: Well, there's a lot of people you know Ø didn't pay it. (WB)*
- **emergent absolute quantifiers** e.g. *a heap of, a couple of, a handful of, various*  
*a lot of bulk haulage. < Mm.> There 's a couple of the families involved in that. And there 's erm the small the small firms like business you know like parcels parcels vans <Mm.> There's couple of people Ø do that. (WB)*
- **cardinal numbers, including complex numerals** e.g. *1.7 million, hundreds*  
*At a glance I saw that nothing could be made of it. ... "And yet," he went on plaintively, "There's hundreds Ø can do it." (WB)*
- **a/zero** (only small fraction (about 3%): no overt marking at all of quantity)  
*Luigi Einaudi, acting director general of the Organization of American States told the Council Wednesday more than money will be needed to create a system to register four and a half million Haitian voters. " This will not be easy. There are Ø problems of infrastructure, of security, of voter education that will need to be handled. (WB)*

# 1. *THERE-CLEFTS*

## RESULTS

- Only **absolute** quantifiers in sample
- Overview of subtypes of quantifiers in quantifying *there-clefts*
  - **Non specific absolute quantifiers**  
e.g. *nothing, somebody, lots of, many, few, several*
  - **Emergent absolute quantifiers**  
e.g. *a heap of, a couple of, a handful of, various*
  - **Cardinal numbers, including complex numerals**  
e.g. *1.7 million, hundreds, tens of thousands*
  - ***a/zero***



## 2. *IT*-CLEFTS

### DATA

- random sample of *it*-clefts in British English in written mode
- 1000 tokens extracted on: *it* + be\*
- no relative markers specified in query because zero subject relative a feature of clefts
- from subcorpus of WordbanksOnline: brnews: 66

## 2. /I-CLEFTS

### DATA

- **Identifying it-clefts: 65/66 or 98.5%**

*By Tuesday it was business as usual with three works, spanning Tharp's career from 1970 to the present date. Rather depressingly, it was the oldest work that was the most successful. (WB Br\_News)*

⇒ unmarked option

- **Quantifying it-clefts: 1/66 or 1.5%** with (emergent) absolute quantifier

*This proposal stirred up so much suspicion that it had to be dropped. Instead, Labour MPs who had been planning to seek election to the Shadow Cabinet were strong armed and intimidated and even bribed into withdrawing from the contest. In the end, it was only a handful of contestants from the Socialist Campaign Group who hopelessly challenged the incumbents. (WB\_BrNews)*

⇒ marked option



2.2. *All* and *most* in  
it-clefts and there-clefts?

# 1. *ALL AND MOST IN THERE-CLEFTS?*

## DATA

Data checked with exhaustive extractions from Wordbanks:

there's all	481
there is all	89
there are all	603
there were all	330
<b>Total</b>	<b>1503</b>

there's most	7
there is most	15
there are most	12
there were most	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

# 1. ALL AND MOST IN THERE-CLEFTS?

## RESULTS

- no attestations of quantifying *there*-clefts with universal relative quantifier *all*
- pattern that is attested:

*there*-clause with postverbal NP + restrictive relative clause

e.g. *The Mandal chair, with its sloping chair and desk, has another, less obvious benefit besides reducing the strain on your back. There is all the [exercise [you get from having to repeatedly pick your pen and pencil up from the floor as they keep rolling off the sloping desk]].*

BUT: no *there*-cleft with cleft relative clause

→ impossibility appears to be confirmed:

\*there's [all Christians] [that say Merry Christmas]

# 1. ALL AND MOST IN THERE-CLEFTS?

## RESULTS

- in Br Spoken:
  - 2 quantifying *there*-clefts with non-universal relative quantifier *most*
  - 2 with *most of the*

*Oh well there's still quite a large number of er roads **blocked**. Er the main er route up from Carlisle to Glasgow the A Seventy-four is still **blocked**. Er the M Six is blocked er at Carlisle. Er there are **most of the motorways in the Cheshire and Lancashire area** ∅ are **passable** with care (WB\_BrSp)*

*And I'm sure you're right that that w+ that that could be **quite complicated** and could be **quite painful** irrespective of the loss. <Yes> Erm there are pe there are **most people who work in the bereavement field** ∅ are **very aware** of this. (WB\_BrSp)*

# 1. ALL AND MOST IN THERE-CLEFTS?

## RESULTS

- also very rare attestations of *most* in non-enumerating existential clauses!

*The Queen, in a simple yellow outfit contrasting with her 1953 regalia, and arriving by car instead of carriage, entered Westminster Abbey to the sound of trumpets and a rousing hymn. The church has been used for coronations for 900 years. Also there were **most of the royal family** -- and 1,000 members of the public who won tickets to the service. (WB)*

⇒ Milsark's hypothesized ban on relative quantifiers in non-enumerating existentials and existential clefts has to be reformulated as a ban on universal relative quantifiers (*all*) only!

## 2. *ALL AND MOST IN IT-CLEFTS?*

### DATA

Data checked with exhaustive extractions from Wordbanks:

it's all	157
it is all	2868
<b>Total</b>	<b>3025</b>

it's most	556
it is most	94
<b>Total</b>	<b>650</b>

## 2. ALL AND MOST IN IT-CLEFTS?

# RESULTS

- very common pattern:

*it*-clause with postverbal NP + restrictive relative clause very common

e.g. *The Mandal chair, with its sloping chair and desk, has another, less obvious benefit besides reducing the strain on your back. There is all the [exercise [you get from having to repeatedly pick your pen and pencil up from the floor as they keep rolling off the sloping desk]]. (WB)*

## 2. ALL AND MOST IN IT-CLEFTS?

# RESULTS

- also some rare quantifying *it*-clefts with *all (of the)* and *most (of the)*
  - 9 quantifying *it*-clefts with universal relative quantifier *all* , 2 with *all of the*

*Mr Cahill asserts that landowners are holding land back from the market, thus driving up prices. In fact it is [all levels of government] [that are responsible]. (NB1)*

*Their cause must be our cause, too," he told his listeners. `Because it is not just Negroes, but really it is [all of us] [who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice]. And we shall overcome.'" (BUAS)*

- 1 quantifying *it*-cleft with non-universal relative quantifier *most* , 1 with *most of the*

*A: ... redundant information turns out to have erm a tonal quality about it ... That has been picked up. B: That's been picked up has it? Good. A: Erm I forget whether it's most of the words or some of the words. I think it's [most of the words] [that are are ... are sung] which seems a rather extraordinary concept. (Br\_Sp)*

## 2. *ALL AND MOST IN IT-CLEFTS?*

# RESULTS

- ⇒ Starting hypothesis confirmed:  
absolute and both universal and non-universal relative quantifiers  
possible in *it*-clefts



# 3. Concluding discussion

### 3. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

- Formal and semantic arguments for typology of specificational *it*- and *there*-clefts given
- On basis of relevant frequencies in corpus study: different markedness patterns revealed

	<i>it</i> -clefts	<i>there</i> -clefts
<b>Specifying</b> instances satisfying variable	<i>It's <b>Chirac</b> who's going to carry the political can</i> <b>Identifying</b> <b>UNMARKED</b>	<i>There's <b>John</b> who's building a new one.</i> <b>Enumerating</b> <b>MARKED</b>
<b>Quantifying</b> instantiation satisfying variable	<i>It's <b>at least three</b> that are not here.</i> <b>Quantifying</b> <b>MARKED</b>	<i>There's <b>at least three</b> that do not work.</i> <b>Quantifying</b> <b>UNMARKED</b>

### 3. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

- Hypothesis, inspired by Milsark (1977), that
  - values in quantifying *it*-clefts take absolute and relative quantifiers
  - values in quantifying *there*-clefts take only absolute quantifierspartly falsified by corpus study

⇒ Reformulated:

- Values in quantifying *it*-clefts take absolute (e.g. *a handful*) and universal (e.g. *all*) and non-universal relative quantifiers (e.g. *most*)
  - Values in quantifying *there*-clefts take absolute (e.g. *a couple*) and non-universal relative (e.g. *most*) quantifiers
- to be confirmed for other quantifiers, e.g. universal relative *each, every*, and non-universal relative *some of*

# 3. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

- Hypothesized explanation:
  - *it*, the definite clitic pronoun, **construes instances designated by Value NP** as coinciding with presupposed set
    - yields **exhaustiveness implicature** with identifying *it*-clefts
    - **universal relative quantifiers** can be used to quantify over whole presupposed set, as well as absolute and non-universal relative quantifiers to measure or quantify over part of presupposed set
  - *there*, the indefinite counterpart of clitic pronoun *it*, does not construe instances as coinciding with presupposed set
    - **non-exhaustiveness implicature** with enumerating *there*-clefts
    - **only absolute and non-universal relative quantifiers** can be used to measure or quantify over part of presupposed set



# Thank you!

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