

EXTRA *BE*: THE SYNTAX OF SHARED SHELL-NOUN CONSTRUCTIONS IN ENGLISH

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This article examines the syntax of extra *be* constructions, common in nonprescriptive English and often considered a curiosity, such as: *The problem is, is that she hates apples*. It has been claimed that there are many different types of extra *be* constructions, with the two main types being double *be* and single *be*, but this article argues that these distinctions are largely superficial. The article reviews previous accounts, presents the complex data, and categorizes most cases of extra *be* into one unified syntactic construction, the SHARED SHELL-NOUN CONSTRUCTION. It is argued that such constructions are syntactically fairly ordinary biclausal specificational copular sentences, consisting of a setup clause and a resolution clause, which share an argument. A second construction is also proposed for one subset of examples, the LINKING FOCUS *BE* CONSTRUCTION, where *be* lexicalizes a left-peripheral focus head.*

Keywords: spoken English, copular constructions, double *be* constructions, single *be* constructions, specificational constructions, shared-argument constructions, exceptional case marking, shell nouns

1. INTRODUCTION. This article examines a set of nonprescriptive constructions found primarily in spoken English that I refer to preanalytically as ‘extra *be* constructions’, since they seem to include an extra verb, *be*. In the literature on extra *be* constructions, two main types are isolated, so I begin by presenting these types, although I later argue that this distinction is largely superficial. The first type, illustrated in 1a, is commonly referred to as the DOUBLE *BE* construction, but it is also referred to as the double *is*, *extris*, extra *is*, *ISIS*, double copula, thing-*is*, reduplicative copula, or 2-*be* construction. The second type, illustrated in 1b, is commonly referred to as the SINGLE *BE* construction, but it is also known as *singlis* or *free-be* (see Bolinger 1987, Massam 1999, McConvell 1988, 2004, O’Neill 2015a, Shapiro & Haley 2002, Tuggy 1996, and Zwicky 2003, 2007). Examples 1a and 1b illustrate the two extra *be* constructions that are the main focus of this article, but there are two additional types of single *be* constructions, as shown in 2a,b, which are discussed later in §5. In this article, extra *be* is italicized.¹ It is identifiable because it is usually optional, as indicated in 1 and 2, and, unlike ordinary *be*, it appears to lack a proper grammatical subject.²

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¹ Sources of extra *be* sentences are provided after each example. Where no source is provided, the sentence is one I recently heard. Sometimes the sentences are modified in the discussion. Extra *be* examples that I have constructed myself are generally noted as such. Punctuation varies with respect to whether there is a comma before extra *be* (Andersen 2002, Bolinger 1987, Brenier & Michaelis 2005, Coppock et al. 2006), and I have not regularized it here.

² When the forms of the two *be* verbs are not identical (to be discussed below), it can be seen clearly that it is the second one that is optional, as in (i) (= 37).

(i) The only difference seems **to be** (*is*) that on the new album things are more mellow.

(Zwicky 2007)

In the analysis in this article, extra *be* seems optional because the main verb is a regular verb that can optionally serve as a setup verb. When it is a setup verb, it can select extra *be*, and when it is not, it does not. In the case of nonselected extra *be* (in 2b), it is optional due to focus choices of the speaker.

- (1) a. One of the realities is, (*is*) that we have hit the wall with respect to spending.
 b. I know this, (*is*) he will never change.
- (2) a. *Is* that you can get a 5-year balloon for 4.25%. (Zwicky 2007)
 b. In Europe the windmills are far offshore but if you put them in Lake Clarence, (*is*), they're just right there.

I argue below that 1a and 1b belong to the same construction type, which I call the 'shared shell-noun construction'. I later suggest that 2a forms a subtype of this same construction, and that 2b forms its own group in which *be* is a linking focus marker merged in the complementizer domain. A key difference between 2b and the others is the inability for the postcopular sentence to appear with the complementizer *that* in sentences like 2b, compared to 1a,b and 2a, where *that* is optionally present.

Before turning to the main body of this article, I present three key characteristics of the constructions in 1a,b: their specificational nature, their biclausal setup-plus-resolution information structure, and their use of shell nouns.

The sentences in 1 are specificational.³ Simple specificational sentences such as 3 are said to have the structure of a list, where the precopular phrase, argued to be a topic (Birner 1994, den Dikken et al. 2000, Mikkelsen 2004, Partee 2010, Paul 2008, Prince 1978), heads up the list by presenting a nominal containing a variable of some sort, while the postcopular phrase is the focus, and it exhaustively fills in the variable by specifying exactly what constitutes the entity referred to by the first nominal (Akmajian 1970, Declerck 1988, den Dikken 2013, Higgins 1973, 1979, among others). Importantly for the analysis here, specificational clauses are commonly considered to involve inversion, whereby the initial noun phrase has moved from a position on the right of the specifying postcopular clause (Declerck 1988, Higgins 1979, Partee 1986, 2010, Williams 1983). This is discussed in more detail below.

- (3) [The reality] is [that we have hit the wall with respect to spending].

Examples 1a,b are similarly specificational, in that the post-*be* sentential clause is focused and it specifies or fills in the value of the topic; that is, it specifies what *one of the realities* is in 1a and what *this* is in 1b.

In addition to simple specificational sentences, we also find specificational pseudoclefts as in 4a, and paratactic apposition structures as in 4b (Brenier & Michaelis 2005, Zwicky 2003, 2007), with which 1a,b share information-structural properties.

- (4) a. [What the reality is] is [that we have hit the wall with respect to spending].
 b. This is the reality: We have hit the wall with respect to spending.

Pseudoclefts constitute a subset of specificational sentences, in which the variable is introduced as a WH-word inside a headless relative clause, known as the setup, and, just as in 3, the value of the variable is specified by the focused postcopular constituent, termed the counterweight. The setup clause is generally argued to form the surface subject and

³ There is some question about whether the extra *be* construction is spreading to predicational contexts. McConvell (2004) provides the example below in (i), and Massam and Grant (2014) note that there are many predicational examples of double *be* in corpora and tentatively assume them to be speech errors. The problem is that there is no easy way to distinguish an emergent construction from a speech error. My intuition is that specificational examples are robustly grammatical, whereas predicative ones are not. McConvell suggests that a thorough study of the prosody of extra *be* constructions might be the key. I set aside possible predicational examples here.

(i) The headline is *is* kinda cute.

(McConvell 2004)

topic of the pseudocleft sentence.⁴ Paratactic apposition clauses similarly contain two clauses, setup and counterweight, which are syntactically separate and complete but are linked through prosody. Like these two types of sentence, the extra *be* sentences in 1 contain two clauses with a setup and counterweight structure and prosody (Brenier & Michaelis 2005, Massam 1999, and Zwicky 2007, among others). The sentences in 1 differ from pseudoclefts and paratactic apposition clauses, however, in that the setup and counterweight clauses are neither in a subject-predicate relation, nor are they separate sentences. Instead, they seem to be a mix of these two structures, so that there is no straightforward way to parse them as sentences.

A third property of extra *be* constructions, observed by many, is that they almost always occur with a noun that readily allows for further specification by a sentential constituent. A few examples of such nouns found in extra *be* constructions, from Curzan's (2012) corpus-based list, are given in 5.

- (5) the reality, the speculation, the principle, the complaint, the thinking, the gamble, the implication, the charge, the consequence, the advantage, the answer, the danger, the trouble, the bottom line, my position, my fear, my assumption ...
(Curzan 2012)

Such nouns are commonly referred to as SHELL NOUNS (Schmid 2000). *Shell noun* is a term for abstract, unspecific nouns such as *thing*, *fact*, *problem*, *question*, and *issue*, which play an important role in discourse as they allow for complex propositional content to be expressed in simple nominal form (Kolhatkar 2015, Schmid 1999, 2000; see also Aijmer 2007, Asher 1993, Francis 1994, Halliday & Hasan 1976, Hunston & Francis 2000, Ivanič 1991, Kolhatkar & Hirst 2014, Stvan 2014, and Vendler 1968). Schmid (2000) provides and categorizes over 600 English nouns that are commonly used in this function, although he also notes that it can be the way a noun is used, rather than its lexical meaning, that makes it a shell noun, with some nouns being particularly conducive, and others more resistant, to such use.⁵ In this article, I include nominal linking words such as demonstratives, some pronouns, and WH-words in this class of nouns (cf. Schmid 2000). As noted, a shell noun encapsulates complex propositional content. The process of identifying that content, in a manner similar to anaphora or cataphora, is known as *shell noun resolution* (Kolhatkar 2015). A key property of extra *be* sentences such as in 1 is that they first introduce or set up a topic shell noun, and then they immediately resolve its (focused) content, across a biclausal sentence. Accordingly, in what follows I refer to the two parts of the extra *be* sentences as the SETUP and the RESOLUTION. Another key property of these sentences is that they include only one shell noun, but this single noun plays a role in both parts of the sentence, that is, in both the setup

⁴ There is debate about the correct terminology and structure of pseudoclefts (and clefts), but the details are not important here. See for example den Dikken 2013, Lambrecht 2001 for overview discussions.

⁵ Interestingly, these include the class of nouns that license a sentential complement without apparent case (Stowell 1981), for example, *the claim that Pat likes Alex*, as noted in Massam 1999. For Stowell, this is possible because the specificational element is essentially 'given' by the shell noun and is thus licensed without case, while Moulton (2015) argues the CPs here are modificational. As Higgins (1979) notes, any noun that can have a complement clause in a complex noun phrase such as this can also appear in a specificational copular clause (though not vice versa). We do find noncanonical shell nouns (I think more commonly in demonstrative cleft sentences), as in example (i). Also, this type more readily allows for the resolution clause to be a DP rather than a CP. See also n. 18.

(i) That was your insultation, was the newspapers.

(Tagliamonte database; see n. 19)

and the resolution. It is because of this argument-sharing property that I refer to these constructions as SHARED SHELL-NOUN CONSTRUCTIONS (SSNCs).⁶

In this introductory section, I have outlined three key properties of the constructions in 1, namely their specificational nature, their setup-and-resolution information structure, and their inclusion of shell nouns. In §4, I develop the formal nature of these characteristics.

My overall goals in this article are twofold: to syntactically categorize the extra *be* data set, and to provide a (broadly) minimalist-theoretic syntactic analysis of the data. I first summarize the literature on these constructions (§2), and then present a range of types of extra *be* constructions that have been discussed and generalize them into a single type (§3). I develop a syntactic analysis in §4, in which extra *be* in 1a,b is an embedded copula that directly lexicalizes T and takes a specificational small clause. Furthermore, it shares its derived subject with a matrix setup verb. In §5, I tentatively analyze extra *be* in 2a as a nonselected matrix version of the same element, with a null subject, and *be* in 2b as a left-peripheral linking focus head. As for the matrix verb *be* in double *be* constructions like 1a, it is a regular specificational, presentational, or existential *be*, which has the capacity to serve as one of a much larger class of matrix verbs (e.g. including *know* in 1b), that can be used to introduce a shell noun topic into the sentence and also select a specifying complement. It will be shown that, once the seemingly messy data is sorted out, it becomes possible to analyze extra *be* constructions in a fairly unified way, using structural proposals that are already reasonably well understood, such as those standardly proposed for specificational copular sentences, shared-argument constructions, and exceptional case-marking constructions. My typology of *be* as relevant for extra *be* constructions, to be developed throughout this article, is presented in 6.

(6) TYPOLOGY OF *be* AS RELEVANT FOR EXTRA *be* CONSTRUCTIONS

- a. EXTRA *be*: any extra instance of *be* that appears not to have a proper subject.
- b. SETUP V: *be* or another verb serving to set up a shell noun (like the first *be* in 1a).
- c. *be*_{RES}: resolution *be*, specificational *be*, but generally selected by a setup verb, linking the shell noun and its resolution, which I argue spells out T directly (like the second *be* in 1a, and like *be* in 1b and arguably 2a).
- d. *be*_{FOC}: a left-peripheral linking focus head (like *be* in 2b), linking a context and an assertion, and focusing the assertion.

2. PREVIOUS ANALYSES. In many online forums (e.g. *Language Log*, *Languagehat*, *Grammarphobia*; cf. McConvell & Zwicky 2006) and in prescriptive discussions of extra *be* constructions, they are considered a curiosity and are sometimes prescribed as ungrammatical (e.g. Brians 2013, Cochrane 2004). In general, theoretical and descriptive linguists are more charitable toward the constructions, considering them to be ‘a vagary of performance’ (Shapiro 1993) or simply ‘nonstandard’ (Lieberman 2004). A link between extra *be* and performance is a common theme in the literature, which has given rise

⁶ Other terms are *container nouns* (Vendler 1968), *general nouns* (Halliday & Hasan 1976), or *label nouns* (Francis 1994), as reviewed by Kolhatkar (2015). Higgins (1979) refers to the first noun in a specificational clause as the ‘superscriptional’ or ‘variable’ noun. Since extra *be* sentences are distinct from simple specificational sentences and pseudoclefts, I use the terms *shell noun*, as well as *setup* and *resolution*, rather than terms such as *superscriptional noun*, *variable*, and *counterweight*, which are identified with simple specificational and pseudocleft constructions.

to comparisons with disfluencies. However, the strong consensus, argued for at length by Coppock and colleagues (2006) largely on prosodic grounds, is that sentences such as 1a,b are legitimate speech constructions, serving specific discourse functions, and not errors or disfluencies (see also Brenier & Michaelis 2005, O'Neill 2015a,b, as well as Andersen 2002, Curzan 2012, McConvell 2004, Tuggy 1996, and Zwicky 2007, among others). In this article, I adopt and support the view that these constructions are legitimate expressions by providing them with a syntactic derivation.

Among the linguists who consider extra *be* constructions to be legitimate constructions, the majority consider them to constitute a distinct type of construction, termed *blends* (e.g. Bolinger 1987, McConvell 1988, Zwicky 2003), *amalgams* (e.g. Brenier & Michaelis 2005, Calude 2008; cf. Lakoff 1974, Lambrecht 1988), or *conflations* (Andersen 2002), which have developed in order to serve a distinctive discourse function (Andersen 2002, Brenier & Michaelis 2005, Calude 2008, Lambrecht 1994). To illustrate, Andersen (2002) considers an example such as 7a to be a focus construction that is a conflation of two construction types: clausal subject postponement and WH-cleft, as shown in 7b–c, where the relevant part of each construction type is underlined.

- (7) a. The intermediary is *is* awareness of our eye movements. (Andersen 2002:48)
 b. Clausal subject postponement:
The intermediary is awareness of our eye movements.
 c. Pseudocleft:
 What the intermediary is, is awareness of our eye movements.

Similarly, Ross-Hagebaum (2004) and Calude (2008) consider sentences like 8a to be a blend of a demonstrative cleft and a *what*-cleft, as in 8b–c, while McConvell (1988, 2004) considers 9a to be a blend of an extraposed relative clause and a copular sentence, as in 9b–c. Brenier and Michaelis (2005) consider such amalgams to be non-standard innovations containing sequences that are not otherwise compatible, arising due to an optimization strategy to resolve both prosodic defects and the dual function of the copula in a simple specificational clause, where it serves both as the licenser of the focused complement clause and as a focus marker. Similarly, Shapiro (1993:12), quoted in Shapiro & Haley 2002, considers extra *be* to constitute the ‘unpacking’ of a covert existential copula that is present even in a simple specificational sentence.

- (8) a. That's what you're meant to do *is* nest. (Calude 2008:113)
 b. Demonstrative cleft:
That's what you're meant to do.
 c. *What* cleft:
 What you're meant to do is nest.
 (9) a. I made the point once before, *is* that we have to *work* on this committee.
 (McConvell 2004, e.g. ex. 16)
 b. Extraposed relative clause:
I made the point once before, that we have to ...
 c. Copular sentence:
 The point I made once before is that we have to work ...

Some discussions of amalgams propose them to be legitimate constructions within a CONSTRUCTION GRAMMAR model. Others propose a performance-based analysis, where the speaker is, during speech (i.e. not via abstract underlying representations), reanalyzing the first part of the sentence as a noun phrase, which can then serve as subject of *be*. Thus, the second half of the sentence is formed as though the first part were different from what it actually is.

The views that extra *be* constructions are performance or constructional amalgams do not easily allow for a legitimate structure within a strictly derivational theory of syntax. In this article I argue that, in fact, extra *be* sentences are reasonably straightforward syntactic structures, which do not require a performance-based analysis. Rather, the amalgam nature of the construction falls out from argument sharing. This article focuses on the synchronic syntax of the constructions, but it must be noted that they also express very interesting discourse functions,⁷ raise questions about the syntax-prosody interface,⁸ and present interesting material for research on language change and variation.⁹

There are some previous syntactic analyses of extra *be* constructions. Massam 1999 analyzes double *be* constructions as reduced pseudoclefts, as also suggested by others (Bolinger 1987, Shapiro & Haley 2002, citing Sihler 2000). This analysis is schematized below in a simplified form. Here, the extra *be* is a copula needing a subject (via an extended projection principle (EPP) feature; Chomsky 1981, 1982), and it also has a focus feature. In certain contexts, it is simply possible for the *wh*-word in the pseudocleft to be null. For single *be* constructions as in 1b, the EPP feature is lost, and *be* serves as a focus marker alone, as in 10b.

- (10) a. [~~What~~ the problem is *vbl*] *is* that I like you.
[F/EPP]
- b. Our kids are great on vacations, but when we come back, *is* they need to play.
[F] (Massam 1999)

There are several problems with this analysis, as discussed by Dickerman (2009) and at some length by Brenier and Michaelis (2005). To mention just one problem, this analysis treats extra *be* as the main verb, whereas there is evidence that it is the first *be* in sentences like 1b that functions as the main verb of the clause (as demonstrated below).

In a second syntactic analysis, as suggested by Curzan (2012) and Tuggy (1996), [*the thing is*] forms a unit of discourse. A problem for this analysis is that it also does not treat the first instance of *be* as a verb, yet its agreement and tense characteristics suggest that it is one. Finally, a third syntactic analysis is found in the work of Bolinger (1987), Koontz-Garboden (2001, cited in Coppock & Staum 2004), Shapiro and Haley (2002), and Zwicky (2003), who all consider [*is that*] to be a complex complementizer. Two problems here are: (i) *that* is not always present in the construction (Brenier & Mi-

⁷ The interesting discourse properties of extra *be* constructions are noted by almost all of the authors cited here, and they are no doubt the reason why these constructions are more common in speech than in writing. There is also research on regular (non-extra *be*) *the fact is that* constructions, for example, Aijmer 2007 and Stvan 2014, and see also the references on shell nouns listed above.

⁸ Coppock and colleagues (2006) note in their acoustic study that there are very few examples with pauses either before or after the second *be* in double *be* examples, and others have commented on this impressionistically (e.g. Andersen 2002); Brenier and Michaelis (2005), however, argue that the structure requires a pause after the first *be*. As some have noted, it might be that what Zwicky (2003) terms the 'cleftoid' nature of the construction is fading, so that it is losing force and becoming simply a specificational sentence (which might explain the triple *be* sentences discussed below). Clearly, as noted by McConvell (2004), more prosodic study of the structure would be of value.

⁹ Many authors raise the issue of the origins of extra *be* constructions; for example, Coppock and Staum (2004) and several authors consider it to be a development still in progress, spreading geographically and in usage (Bakke & Kornkven 2009). Curzan (2012) demonstrates that its frequency has increased over the years. However, Bolinger (1987) shows that the construction has existed for at least 130 years with his oft-cited example, shown in (i), and also notes that his own first consciously heard example was spoken in 1971 by a former LSA president.

(i) My excuse and reason is, is the different way all the Wedgewoods view the subject from what you and my sister do. (letter of Charles Darwin (1809–1882), cited in Bolinger 1987)

chaelis 2005), and (ii) *be* can inflect independently (as is discussed below). A related idea, that extra *be* is a focus or topic particle, in a functional head in the left periphery of the clause within the CP domain, is considered or discussed by several authors (e.g. Coppock & Staum 2004, den Dikken 2013, den Dikken et al. 2000, Dickerman 2009, Massam 1999, McConvell 1988, O'Neill 2015a,b, 2016, and Tuggy 1996). We return to this idea below in the analysis of sentences like 2b. Brenier and Michaelis (2005) criticize the idea that *be* is a focus particle because *be* also has a relational (identity) function, it is not generally a focus marker, and it does not behave like other grammaticalized verbs serving in adverbial functions in that it can take a CP as its complement, as in 1a,b.¹⁰ The analysis presented below considers extra *be* in most cases to be essentially a regular copular verb, used in a fairly regular specificational sentence, thus avoiding these problems.

A recent such treatment is presented by O'Neill (2015b, 2016) (see also Koops & Ross-Hagebaum 2008). O'Neill provides a sophisticated syntactic analysis for sentences like 11, in which the copula lexicalizes a head in Top(ic)P, with a Fin(ite) phrase in its specifier and a CP in its complement, as in 12.

(11) That's what I want *is* I want a break. (O'Neill 2015b:284)

(12) [_{TopP} [_{FinP} That's what I want] [_{Top} *is* [_{CP} (~~I want~~) a break]]]. (O'Neill 2015b:284)

O'Neill's analysis relates the amalgam copula to the predicative functional head Relator proposed by den Dikken (2006). The copula lexicalizes a relator that can appear in different heads and takes the two conjunct clauses as its arguments (see also de Vries 2006, 2009). The analysis considers *be* here to have been co-opted to perform new functions. I touch on some aspects of this type of analysis further below in §5.

In summary, from the literature on extra *be* we know that: it is not a disfluency (e.g. Coppock et al. 2006); it is common in speech but is also found in writing (Andersen 2002); it is widespread and can be heard in the United States (Zwicky 2007), Australia (McConvell 1988), Canada (Massam 1999), New Zealand (Calude 2008), and England (Andersen 2002); it is used by educated speakers (Albright 2004, Zimmer 2012); and it has been used for quite some time (e.g. Bolinger 1987). These properties suggest that it is a legitimate construction. In the next section I classify a range of extra *be* constructions into one main group, and then in §4 I provide a syntactic analysis for the construction.

3. THE SHARED SHELL-NOUN CONSTRUCTION. In this section I present a range of types of extra *be* sentences and propose a unified structural template for these constructions.

3.1. UNIFYING EXTRA *BE* CONSTRUCTIONS. In the literature there is a bewildering array of subtypes of extra *be* constructions, and there is no generally adopted typology, since they can be catalogued in a variety of ways, depending on how fine-grained or how general we want our catalogue to be (cf. Zwicky 2007). In this section I locate the common thread for four main subtypes, namely a shared shell-noun object, and based on this propose a unified structure. I make no distinction between double and single *be* constructions—in fact, the analysis cuts across this initial descriptive divide.

The SSNC template is provided in 13. It encompasses four types of sentences that superficially appear to have different properties. These are presented as types (i)–(iv) below, and for each, I demonstrate that it is a regular SSNC, fitting the template in 13.

¹⁰ I argue below that it is only in cases where the resolution XP cannot take a complementizer that *be* is a left-peripheral head, and I consider its relational nature in such cases to be compatible with a CP domain functional-head analysis, since complementizers can relate sentences with material to the left, either in Spec,CP or in earlier sentences. See also O'Neill 2015b for an analysis that takes these considerations into account.

- (13) SSNC TEMPLATE (types (i)–(iv) below):

DP_{*j*} V shell, *be* [XP]

I begin with the clearest cases, type (i), where the shell noun is the object of the initial verb.

- (14) SSNC TYPE (i): The shell noun is the object of the first verb.

Template: DP V shell *be* [XP]

Example: You know the problem, *is* [we've got kids that age].

In this type, the construction pivots on an object shell DP, which is underlined in examples given here. The first verb serves to introduce or set up the shell noun, and the specific content or value of the shell noun is resolved by the following phrase [XP], which is presented in square brackets here. The shell and its resolution [XP] are linked by specificational *be*.

There is another set of examples, type (ii), where the shell noun is the subject of the preceding verb.

- (15) SSNC TYPE (ii): The shell noun is the subject of the first verb.

Template: shell V *be* [XP]

Example: The problem remains *is* [we can't just turn up there].

We can note that types (i) and (ii) differ in that (i) includes transitive verbs, where the shell DP appears as the object and there is an independent subject, whereas (ii) includes unaccusative verbs, where the shell DP appears as the subject. Two examples from the literature are provided in 16, with the unaccusative verb in boldface.

- (16) a. The fact **remains** *is* [that people's living standards are being cut].

(McConvell 1988)

b. The problem **arises** *is* [that ...].

(Bolinger 1987)

The subjects in type (ii), however, can be assumed to be objects at an earlier stage of the derivation, according to the UNACCUSATIVE HYPOTHESIS (Perlmutter 1978), by which arguments that are single-argument themes receive their interpretation in internal argument position. Thus, type (ii) can be collapsed with type (i) as involving a shared matrix object, through the derivation in 17.¹¹

- (17) The problem remains ~~the problem~~ *is* [we can't just turn up there].

Both types (i) and (ii) respect the main template in 13, indicated with the possibility of coindexing (i.e. via Move) between the subject and the object in 13. An important point here is that this group also contains the most prominent extra *be* constructions, those that have excited the most interest, the so-called double *be* constructions. If the setup verb is the unaccusative verb *be*, then after movement of the thematic object to subject position, the sentence will have two adjacent instances of the verb *be*, as shown in the (simplified) structure below.

- (18) a. The problem **is** ~~the problem~~ *is* [the guy is an idiot].

b. The thing **is** ~~the thing~~ *is* [I don't even care].

In the classification here these sentences do not form a special class, but rather they fall in with the other extra *be* constructions as outlined in the SSNC template in 13.¹²

¹¹ The schematic structures in this section are developed in more detail later in the article. In this article, I use the strikethrough convention for XP movement, but I use the trace convention for head movement, in order to visually distinguish the two processes.

¹² A potential problem here is that the unaccusative verb, the first *be* in 18, cannot stand on its own as a verb (**The problem is*), unlike the verbs *remain* and *arise* (e.g. *The problem remains*). But *be* is always superfi-

We also find cases, type (iii), where it is not clear whether the shell noun is the subject or object of the preceding verb.

(19) SSNC TYPE (iii): It is not immediately clear whether the shell noun is the subject or object of a preceding verb.

Template: shell? V shell? *be* [XP]

Examples: a. This is the problem/what I think, *is* [he just doesn't care].
 b. The problem/what I think is this, *is* [he just doesn't care].

This group includes examples with demonstrative clefts (*this is what I think*) (Calude 2008, Jehn 1979) or with basic demonstrative subject sentences (*this is the problem*) as the setup, as well as examples where the setup clause is specificational (*the problem is this*). These latter examples are problematic for our classification because both arguments of the first verb—subject and object¹³—are potential shell nouns. Examine the two examples given in 19, repeated in 20. In the discussion following 20, I refer only to the first half of the sentence, the setup part that appears prior to the extra *is* constituent shown in parentheses.

(20) a. This is the problem/what I think, (*is* [he just doesn't care]).
 b. The problem/what I think is this, (*is* [he just doesn't care]).

The first part of 20a might be considered type (i), with a shell object, *the problem* (or *what I think*). As for the first part of 20b, it might be considered to be type (ii), since *the problem* (or *what I think*) is now the subject. However, it is also the case that *this* can serve as a shell noun, as shown clearly in 21, and if it is so considered, then we would reverse this classification, so that 20a would be type (ii) and 20b would be type (i).

(21) I know this, *is* she won't be late again.

We can see that the setup sentences of type (iii) examples (e.g. *This is the problem* and *The problem is this*) have two particular properties. First, *be* is serving as the setup verb, and second, in these setup sentences both DPs belong to the class of shell DPs. In fact, there is debate in the literature about the correct analysis of sentences such as these (Calude 2008, Higgins 1979:234). For the sake of discussion, I assume here that *this* is the specifying nominal, and *the problem* is the shell nominal (Heycock 1994), noting that the analysis to be proposed would work equally well with the opposite assumption.¹⁴

As noted in §1, simple specificational sentences are widely argued to involve inversion (to be discussed in more detail below). Based on work by den Dikken and by Heycock (e.g. den Dikken 2006, Heycock 2012), I propose that in a specificational sentence the first noun phrase begins as the complement of a null relational (F) head that is embedded under a (raising) copula verb.¹⁵ Let us now consider the setup sentences in

cially transitive, since it always takes a small-clause-internal argument, raising the subject (or object, in the case of specificational *be*) of the small clause to its subject position (e.g. den Dikken 2013, Heycock 2012).

¹³ There is debate as to whether the precopular superscriptional or shell noun of a specificational sentence is an argument in the sentence, or in fact the (deep) predicate (see e.g. Heycock 2012, Partee 2010, among others). I consider it to be an argument, in particular, a (deep) complement and a (derived) subject. This is important, because I consider the shell noun to be an argument in the matrix clause—hence it must be an argument in the embedded clause too.

¹⁴ No matter how these sentences are analyzed in terms of main-clause inversion (or not), they fit into the analysis presented here, since each view posits a shell DP in object position. See also the specificational chaining sentences discussed below, with a different form of repetition.

¹⁵ This type of analysis arises in part from the desire not to have to posit different lexical types of *be*, as the differences between the various types of sentences with *be* now reside in the F head of the small clause, not in the copular verb.

22a and 23a, which, with the assumption made above, would have analyses as in 22b and 23b.¹⁶

- (22) a. This is the problem.
 b. [this is [~~this~~ F the problem]].
- (23) a. The problem is this.
 b. [the problem is [this F ~~the problem~~]].

If we make the assumption above that in these sentences the demonstrative is the specifying noun (rather than being the shell noun), then in the derivation of 22a, the nominal (*this*) raises from a specifier position of the matrix F clause to become the subject of the sentence, as in 22b, and the reading is presentational. Now in 23a, the complement of the matrix F clause raises to subject position in lieu of the specifier, via inversion as in 23b, to yield what is a typical specificational sentence, with inverse order. The important point here is that this analysis allows 19/20a to fit directly into the general SSNC template provided in 13, since the shell nominal (*the problem*) is here also a complement in the matrix clause, as shown with the full sentence in 24a. As for 19/20b, this sentence would involve specificational inversion within the matrix clause, so the surface subject of the matrix clause also appears as a copy or trace in the object position of the matrix *be* clause, as in 24b. In this way, 20b is very much like the type (ii) unaccusative examples discussed above, since the matrix surface subject has moved from a matrix complement position.

- (24) a. This is [~~this~~ F the problem] (*is* he just doesn't care).
 b. The problem is [this F ~~the problem~~] (*is* he just doesn't care).

Given this analysis, we can consider type (iii), shown in 19, to fall in with types (i) and (ii), since both of the examples (19a and 19b) involve a shared shell nominal that serves as a complement of the setup verb, either remaining in this position or moving up to become the matrix subject. Thus types (i)–(iii) all fit into the general SSNC template provided in 13. In all examples, extra *be* is an embedded verb, under a matrix setup verb, which can be *be* or some other verb. Since extra *be* serves to specify the resolution, I refer to it as *be_{RES}*.

There are three groups of *be_{RES}* constructions that do not appear with a shell noun. Two groups are discussed below in §5. The other group constitutes type (iv) of the SSNC types that fall under the template in 13. Here, although there is no overt shell-noun object, there is a noncopular setup verb, which assigns an internal thematic role, and it is this logical argument that serves as the shell noun. This type is presented in 25.

- (25) SSNC TYPE (iv): There is no overt shell noun, but there is a thematically implied one.
 Template: V NULL-shell *be* [XP]
 Example: She was telling me, *is* [they have to eat with the kids].

Although there is no apparent shell DP in 25, the shell noun is thematically recoverable, because the setup verb *tell* assigns an internal theme role, which serves as the shell that is being resolved in the resolution clause. For these examples, I thus posit a null object (x) for the matrix verb, as shown in 26, which includes two additional examples.

- (26) a. She was telling me x *is* [they have to eat with the kids]. (Massam 1999)
 b. I realized x when he said that *is* [he just doesn't care]. (Massam 1999)
 c. I'd like to say x *is* [that ...] (McConvell 2004)

¹⁶ Below I introduce an extra level in specificational structures, separating the copula and T, as in den Dikken 2006 and Heycock 2012, although later still in the article I argue, based on agreement facts, that *be_{RES}* merges in T in SSNCs.

The assumption that these cases have a null object allows them to fit into the general SSNC template in 13, along with types (i)–(iii) as discussed above.¹⁷

This concludes the discussion of the four subtypes of SSNCs that fit into the template in 13. The following subsection constitutes a brief digression to present the empirical range of examples found within this construction type.

3.2. VARIATIONS WITHIN THE TEMPLATE. SSNC sentences can be descriptively divided into many subtypes, depending mainly on three factors: the copular vs. lexical nature of the matrix verb along with the deictic vs. lexical nature of its subject, the nature of the shell nominal, and the category of XP that serves as the specifying phrase. Some of these subtypes have been isolated as individual constructions (e.g. demonstrative clefts), and it is true that each subtype presents its own interesting characteristics. However, this article seeks to identify common ground among the various subtypes, and I do not consider the differences between them to be of importance in the syntactic analysis to be presented in §4. Below, I provide examples that illustrate the subtypes. In these examples, as above, the object shell noun is underlined, the specifying phrase is in square brackets, and extra *be* is in italics.

First we find examples where the matrix verb and its subject are fully lexical (i.e. not copular and not demonstrative) and the shell object DP is some form of demonstrative or a WH-nominal.

- (27) Subject and first verb are lexical; shell DP is a demonstrative or a WH-nominal.
- a. We've addressed this many times in this program *is* [the banks are making a ton of money].
 - b. You see that again and again, *is* [that phonologists come up with theories for English which just don't work for Tiberian Hebrew]. (Massam 1999)
 - c. You know what *is*, [we've got kids ages 7 and 10 and they've grown out of those videos]. (Massam 1999)

Alternatively, it is possible for the shell object DP to be a lexical noun, rather than a demonstrative or WH-nominal. In these cases, the matrix subject is also lexical, and the verb (often the verb *have*) is also lexical, not copular.

- (28) Matrix subject, verb, and shell object are lexical.
- a. I made the point once before *is* [that we have to *work* on this committee]. (McConvell 1988)
 - b. The premier has done something quite different, *is* [she has reached out to the other parties].
 - c. Anne has the same problems with her anxieties *is* [that she wakes up in the night].
 - d. We have a conundrum *is* [we can't be here and there at the same time].

Another possibility is that the first verb is *be* (presentational, existential), and it has a demonstrative (including *here* and *there*) or a WH-nominal (*which*) as surface subject. This includes the demonstrative cleft type, presented above in type (iii) (19a), which has been discussed in detail by others such as Calude (2008), Jehn (1979), O'Neill (2015b), and Ross-Hagebaum (2004). Here too, a range of types of matrix-object shell DPs are possible and a range of types of embedded specifying phrases ([XP]) are also

¹⁷ I recognize that positing a null object might be theoretically complicated, since null objects in English are not freely permitted, but I set aside these issues here because the structure fits perfectly into the template if we do assume a null object. It is also possible, though, to analyze these as cases of nonselected *be*_{RES}, such as the sentences in 2a to be discussed below.

possible.¹⁸ The examples below illustrate a variety of matrix subjects (*that, there, here, which*), a variety of shell objects (WH-phrases, DPs, *it*), and a variety of specifying XPs, including DPs, CPs, infinitivals, PPs, and VPs. In these examples, the characteristic demonstrative cleft introducing material is in bold.

- (29) Deictic subject, copular main verb, various shell nouns, and XPs
- a. **That's** what all this stuff's based on, *is* [intuition]. (Calude 2008)
 - b. Maybe **that's** why we're self-reliant *is* [we don't expect anything from the government]. (Massam 1999)
 - c. ... **that's** their biggest problem *is* [boredom]. (Brenier & Michaelis 2005)
 - d. **That's** the other thing I wanted to say about this *is* [that we should never have agreed to the conditions]. (Massam 1999)
 - e. **That can't be** a very welcome outcome, *is* [that rates will now rise]. (McConvell 1988)
 - f. **That's** it, *is* [he doesn't want to go].
 - g. **There's** one thing I need to do *is* [leave a check]. (Zwicky 2007)
 - h. **Here is** one problem, *is* [that Florida is undecided].
 - i. Yes, **which is** the problem with the phonology paper *is* [that I was starting from scratch]. (Massam 1999)
 - j. **That's** my dream I guess *is* [to have my own darkroom]. (Ross-Hagebaum 2004)
 - k. **That's** where I met all of my friends *was* [during frosh-week]. (Tagliamonte database¹⁹)

In addition, as discussed above, it is also possible for the matrix verb to be an unaccusative verb (16) (including setup *be* as in 1a) or to be specificational *be* (20b), and for the shell noun to be null when it receives a clear thematic role from the matrix verb (26).

3.3. SUMMARY. In this section I have brought together four types of extra *be* constructions into one template, arguing that they all involve a shared object shell noun. I have also demonstrated some of the empirical variations that can be found within the template. Although there are many different ways of classifying the data, I consider them structurally to all involve a shared shell noun (whether overt, as in most cases, or null). Let us now turn to the syntactic analysis of these constructions.

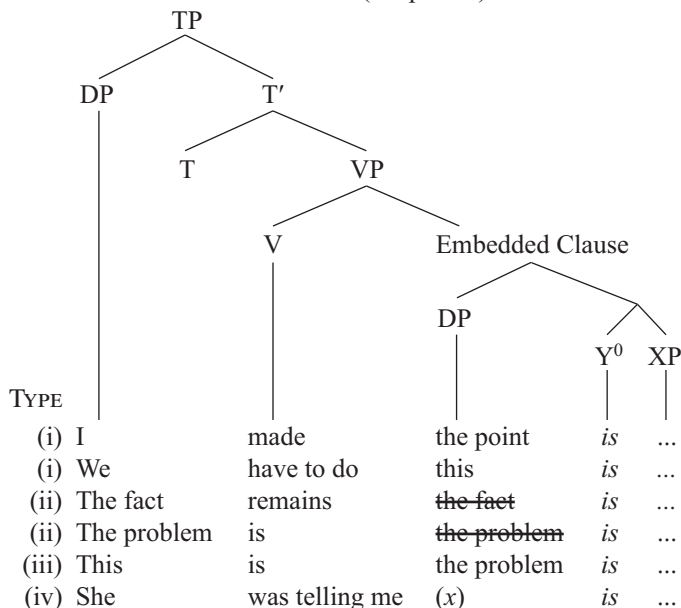
4. A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF SSNCs. In this section I provide a structural analysis of the SSNC extra *be* constructions that were discussed in §3.

4.1. THE SHARED-ARGUMENT ANALYSIS. As demonstrated above, across all the subtypes of SSNC constructions the shell DP is in some way an object of the matrix setup clause as well as being a logical argument of an embedded specificational clause. As a structural starting point for SSNC constructions, then, I provide the tree in 30, with some examples below showing how the various subtypes fit into it (see also Massam 2013). Note that this tree is a simplified schema of the proposal to be developed here, while the final proposed formal analysis, given in 32, is argued for throughout this section.

¹⁸ As noted above (n. 5), there is variation among SSNCs as to how permissible it is to have a nonsentential resolution, for example, a DP, with the demonstrative cleft ones being more permissible. But examples can be found (e.g. in the COCA corpus; Davies 2008–2012) of all subtypes of SSNCs with DP resolutions.

¹⁹ The Tagliamonte database examples were extracted from an archive of Ontario English Dialects collected under the auspices of grants funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to Sali A. Tagliamonte, 2003–2018. See also Tagliamonte 2014.

(30) SHARED-ARGUMENT STRUCTURE (simplified)



This schema shows how we can integrate a wide range of extra *be* constructions into one structural type, so it is the starting point for my proposal, which is that in SSNCs, extra *be* is an embedded verb, appearing within a selected specificational complement to a setup verb, with which it shares an argument.²⁰ Argument sharing has been proposed for several other constructions, such as direct-perception verb constructions (e.g. Rizzi 2000 [1992]), secondary predication constructions (e.g. Rothstein 1983), exceptional case marking (ECM) constructions (e.g. Chomsky 1981), and serial verb constructions (e.g. Baker 1989). English examples of the first three types are shown in 31.

- (31) a. Jeanne saw Benoit water the plants.
 b. Joelle watered the tulips flat.
 c. Louis considers Hubert to be a lot of fun.

In the constructions in 31, the underlined object argument of the matrix verb is also an argument of the following embedded predicate, thus receiving two semantic roles, as argued by the authors above and others (e.g. Bowers (1993, 1997), Collins (1997), Déchaine (1986), den Dikken (2006), Foley and Olson (1985), Hoekstra (1988, 1992), Massam (1985), and Stowell (1981, 1983)). There are many structural proposals for shared-argument constructions, and to summarize them all would take us beyond the scope of this article. Generally, argument-sharing analyses propose that the embedded clause is a complement to the matrix verb, with the shared argument in its top specifier position. In 32 I present one such analysis, for a direct-perception verb example such as 31a, based on Rizzi (2000 [1992]).²¹

²⁰ Argument sharing has been considered by other scholars for extra *be* constructions (e.g. Calude 2008:114) and similar constructions (Lambrecht 1988), but these authors are working in different frameworks, and hence their structures either do not follow basic principles of X-bar theory, and/or they involve a special process of amalgamation. Note that I put aside other approaches to argument sharing such as multidominance (Citko 2005, among others).

²¹ There are more complex embedded structures proposed in the literature (e.g. Bowers 1997), and in fact, the structure to be proposed in this article is more complex also. Note that the structure in 32 is also similar to the one proposed by some (Kayne 1984, Pylkkänen 2008) for double object constructions or applicative

(32) TP complement/Shared-argument structure (cf. Rizzi 2000 [1992])

Jeanne saw [_{TP} [Benoit] T [water the plants]].

Rizzi (2000 [1992]) argues that in such sentences the complement of the main verb is a reduced sentence (a TP not a CP), and that its subject receives two thematic roles, one from the matrix verb, which accounts for the fact that in such sentences this argument (*Benoit*) is directly perceived (actually *seen*) by the matrix subject, and one from the embedded verb, such that *Benoit* is also the agent of the verb *water* in 32. It is the reduced nature of the complement clause, a TP small clause (which also receives a thematic role from the matrix verb), that allows the matrix verb to assign a thematic role and case to an embedded subject.

Similarly, I propose that in the schematic structure in 30, just as in 32, the embedded subject (the shell DP) is thematically related to the first verb and also receives a thematic role in the embedded clause, which in SSNCs is always a specificational copular clause. I further posit that the TP small clause is selected as a resolution clause by the matrix setup verb.²²

So far then, in SSNCs, the main clause is the setup, which introduces the shell nominal by stating its existence (*There is a problem, The problem is, etc.*), by identifying it (*This is the problem, That is the problem, etc.*), or by indicating how it came into existence or otherwise presenting or locating it in some way (*A problem arose, She has a problem, I know the problem, etc.*). This shell noun is resolved specificationally in the embedded clause. The full structure to be argued for here is given in 33. The setup verb selects a specificational complement, which, because it is specificational, involves inversion. The shell noun is, after inversion, the subject of the embedded clause, in which position it also receives a thematic role from the matrix verb. Finally, in this structure both the shared argument and the matrix verb undergo movement to a higher vP position in the matrix clause, where they can be followed by a matrix adverbial phrase (e.g. *yesterday*). All aspects of this structure are discussed in more detail below.

structures, as in (i) below, in which a transitive applicative head (Appl) with two arguments, one a specifier and one a complement, is merged under a verb where one or both of Appl's arguments also arguably bears a thematic relation with the verb. This too, then, could be considered a case of argument sharing.

(i) Agent Verb [XP Appl⁰ YP]: *Mary gave [John a book].*

²² An important difference between direct-perception verb constructions and SSNCs is the relation that holds between the matrix verb and the embedded TP complement. Rizzi (2000 [1992]) argues that the matrix verb, for example, *see* in 32, assigns a single thematic role (e.g. *that which is seen*), which is shared by the TP complement and the embedded subject. It is not the case, however, that a setup verb like *know* in 2b assigns a thematic role to the TP, *this is that he will never change*, as well as to the embedded subject *this*. Instead, I propose that a setup verb assigns not a thematic role but an information-structural role to the embedded TP. A similar example is found in ECM constructions such as 31c. I argue in Massam 1985 that in such sentences the matrix verb assigns a thematic role to the complement TP (or IP), and it also assigns an information-structural role of topic, or an 'aboutness' role, to the subject of the embedded clause (along with assigning it case), as in *He considers of/about Hubert that he is a lot of fun*. So, in direct-perception verbs one thematic role is shared between the TP complement and the embedded subject, while in ECM structures one thematic role is assigned to the TP and an additional informational-structure role is assigned to the embedded subject. In SSNCs, I posit that an information-structural role is assigned by the setup verb to the TP, and a thematic role is assigned to the subject of the embedded clause. The important point is that in all of these constructions, the embedded subject receives two roles so they are all shared-argument constructions. A final point here is that in SSNCs, the two verbs might undergo restructuring (e.g. Wurmbrand 2001) so as to form a single complex verb at LF (logical form), which would account for the intuition some express that the embedded clause forms the main assertion in the sentence (e.g. McConvell 1988). (Note I here consider arguments of copular verbs to have semantic roles.)

(33) PROPOSAL FOR THE STRUCTURE OF SSNCs (illustrated with type (i))

Type (i): I made the point *is* [that he hates apples].[I T [_{VP} made [_{VP} the point v⁰ [ADV [_{VP} made [_{TP} the point F+be/T [_{FP} [that he hates apples] t_F the point]]]]]]]]].

I now proceed to argue step by step for the structure in 33. The first issue to be discussed is the status of the embedded *be*. I am claiming that it is a specificational copular verb, but it might be thought that the (morpho)phonology of *be* has here been appropriated to serve some other purpose. For example, some (e.g. Coppock and Staum (2004), Dickerman (2009)) have proposed that *be* is a focus marker, den Dikken (2013) suggests that it is a topic head, I have proposed (Massam 2013) that *be* is an appositive head, and O'Neill (2015a,b, 2016) proposes that *be* can be in various left-peripheral heads. There is evidence against a view that *be* here is some kind of inert particle, since it behaves like a verb in that it can agree with a nominal phrase and it can bear an independent tense (Massam & Grant 2014). For this reason, I consider *be* in extra *be* constructions to actually be the verb *be*, as commonly used in a specificational construction.²³ The relevant tense and agreement properties are illustrated immediately below.

Massam & Grant 2014 (M&G in examples cited below) notes that extra *be*²⁴ always appears in third person, which is explained by the fact that it always relates an XP to a superscriptional (shell) noun, and such nouns are always third person. Based on a corpus study, however, it is demonstrated that extra *be* can vary in number, and that when it does, it generally agrees in number with the XP that follows it.²⁵ In most cases, this XP is a CP—thus in most cases, the number form of *be* is singular (presumably by default, if CP does not bear number). Notably, even in cases where *be* is singular, it can be discerned that *be* agrees with the following CP, and not with the preceding DP, because it is singular even if the preceding DP is plural, as illustrated below.

- (34) a. The cruel facts of life are, *is* [that not every person who teaches Art is a good artist himself]. (McConvell 1988)
 b. ... but the hard facts are, *is* [that somebody's gonna pay for the treatment that's rendered ...] (COCA; cited in M&G)
 c. Anne has the same problems with her anxieties *is* [that she wakes up in the night].

Furthermore, though rare, there are cases where the following XP is plural, and it is in precisely these cases that Massam and Grant find plural forms of extra *be*, as in 35. This is true even if the first verb is singular, as shown in 35c.²⁶

²³ Although I claim below that *be*_{RES} lexicalizes T directly when selected by a setup verb, unlike regular specificational *be* in English. O'Neill (2015a) considers *be* to merge even higher, in Fin or Top, depending on the type of construction and on the inflectional options for the verb, and I also argue below that *be* is in the CP domain in some constructions.

²⁴ Referred to as *intrusive be* in Massam & Grant 2014.

²⁵ Massam and Grant (2014) use data from two corpora, COCA (Davies 2008–2012) and MICASE (Simpson et al. 2002).

²⁶ A similar study has not been undertaken for single *be* constructions (which are much harder to pick out of a corpus), but there are examples in the literature which suggest that it is possible for agreement to be with the preceding nominal, at least in demonstrative cleft examples as in (i) where the extra *be* agrees not with the following plural DP, but either agrees with the preceding one (the shell nominal) or appears as default singular. However, it is possible that *be* here is singular because it agrees with its following small clause (FP) complement, in which case the agreement is postverbal. Note that the extra *be* here can equally well be plural; that is, agreement can be postverbal (den Dikken 2013). Further study of the agreement options here would have

- (35) a. ... then, basically it all looked like, it virtually all looked like adult behavior, the narrower terms are *are*, [child abuse, uh driving while intoxicated, sexual abuse, terrorism] there are a- a lot of others ...
(MICASE; cited in M&G)
- b. ... the only competitive e- equilibrium prices that exist are, *are*, [the efficient prices].
(MICASE; cited in M&G)
- c. ... what's happening today around us is *are* [changes which might be about as big and as important as the changes we talked about, last week].
(COCA; cited in M&G)

From this we can conclude that the form of extra *be* is not (always) default *is*, nor does it blindly concord with the first verb in number. Massam and Grant also argue that extra *be* has an independent tense feature, rather than simply appearing in default present tense or agreeing with the first verb for tense. Examples such as the following illustrate this.

- (36) a. ... and the reason being *is* [that they would draw different nutrients from the soil].
(MICASE; cited in M&G)
- b. ... the idea was *is* [that [I] was giving examples of all of it ...]
(MICASE; cited in M&G)
- c. ... the interesting thing is *was*, [you mentioned erogenous zones, there was one that Foley hit that he avoided].
(COCA; cited in Massam 2014)
- d. The thing was, *is* [that she would have been fine anyway]. (Massam 1999)

As Massam and Grant note, the agreement and tense facts argue that extra *be* in double *be* constructions is an autonomous verb with independent tense and agreement features, and not a frozen or anaphoric (or 'particle-ized') form of the verb. This argues against analyses where *be* is a particle or functional head, and not a verb.

Note that in addition to providing information about the featural content of extra *be*, sentences with differing forms of *be* allow us to clarify that it is the second *be* that is optional, or extra (as mentioned in n. 2), since it is the first verb that expresses the required matrix form under embedding.²⁷

- (37) The only difference seems **to be *is*** that on the new album things are more mellow.
(Zwicky 2007)

The fact that *be* bears tense and agrees with its following nominal phrase supports the treatment of extra *be* as a verb, not a particle. At the same time, these facts also tell us about the size of the embedded complement: it must be large enough to include tense and agreement. In addition, since the clause is specificational, it must be large enough to allow for inversion to take place.

As noted above, it is widely argued that in specificational copular sentences, the argument that is more intensional, or more weakly referential, or less specified (i.e. the superscriptional or shell nominal) is merged in complement position, and the one that is less intensional, or more strongly referential, or more specified is merged in a specifier position (Declerck 1988, Heycock 2012, Higgins 1979, Partee 1986, 2010, Romero 2005, Rothstein 1995, Williams 1983, among others). Thus, a sentence like 38, where

to take place within the broader context of variation between pre- and postverbal agreement in English, as seen also with existentials: *There is/are three men in the room.*

- (i) That's what I noticed when I was there *was* the ice storms you got around February.

(Ross-Hagebaum 2004)

²⁷ Examples such as 36a might belie this claim, since it would seem that the first verb *being* cannot serve as the main verb of a sentence; however, Zwicky (2007) notes that this verb form has come to be used as a main verb. Alternatively, such examples might be examples of nonselected *be*_{RES}, discussed in §5.

Camille is more specified than *the winner*, is considered to involve inversion whereby the postcopular element, rather than the element in specifier position, has fronted to a position that I here assume, following others, is the specifier of TP.²⁸ (For various views on the issue of inversion, see Adger & Ramchand 2003, den Dikken 1995, Heggie 1988, Heycock 1994, Mikkelsen 2002, 2005, Moro 1997, as well as e.g. Heller 2005, Heycock & Kroch 1997, Zamparelli 2000, among others.)

(38) The winner is *Camille*.

Similarly, in SSNCs, if we look at surface word order of a sentence like 1b, for example, the less specified argument (*this* in 1b) appears prior to the copular verb; that is, the shell noun is less specified than the [XP] (*that we have hit the wall ...*), but from word order alone it seems that the shell noun is the subject of the TP, while the more specified argument is postcopular. Thus, we see that inversion has occurred in these embedded specificational clauses just as with main-clause specificational sentences.

The two characteristics under discussion, namely the presence of tense and agreement in the embedded clause and the characteristic specificational inversion, are accounted for by the claim that the complement of the setup verb is a TP small clause (Doherty 2000, Rizzi 2000 [1992]).²⁹ In addition, the TP complement allows for the matrix verb to 'reach' the embedded subject to assign it a second thematic role, since the boundary between them is not a full CP. This yields the correct predictions about word order, specificational meaning, the presence of agreement and tense, and, as I argue below, the unusual postverbal agreement discussed above.³⁰ I adopt 39 as the structure for a regular specificational sentence, following the analysis of specificational sentences outlined in Heycock 2012,³¹ based on den Dikken 2006.³²

(39) Structure of a regular English specificational sentence

[_{TP} the winner F+be+T [_{C_{OP}} ~~the winner~~ t_{F+be} [_{FP} *Camille* t_F ~~the winner~~]]].

At the top of the relevant structure (under CP, not shown) there is a TP, which takes a copular clause as its complement, which in turn takes a small clause headed by a functional head F, which specificationally relates two nominal arguments. Heycock (2012) assumes head movement of F to COP, which extends the phase and renders the specifier and the complement of F equidistant for movement out of FP, making movement of the complement of F to the specifier position of COP possible. Once in this position, it is the closest DP to T, for Agree and subsequent movement to specifier of T; thus the sentence ends up with inverse order, with the less referential argument appearing as subject of the sentence, and agreement is with this surface subject. If the subject of the FP raises, the result is not a specificational sentence (*Camille is the winner*).

In this system, the specificational nature of the clause depends on its derivation. However, it is necessary in SSNCs to make it obligatory that the lower complement,

²⁸ Some argue that inversion can involve movement to CP or FocP (e.g. Heggie & Iwasaki 2013, and see Partee 2010 for Russian).

²⁹ Also relevant is that some inversion analyses of specification require a T (e.g. Mikkelsen 2005).

³⁰ These constructions cause problems for the view that tense and agreement are only possible in TP in the context of a higher CP (e.g. Chomsky 2008), unless we assume that the matrix CP is the relevant one for both clauses. Similarly, SSNCs, along with contact relatives, mentioned in §4.2, argue that case is not just a reflex of an agreement relation (Chomsky 2008). I do not pursue these issues here.

³¹ I have modified the structure from Heycock 2012:231 in order to provide more derivational information. As noted above, I use the trace convention for head movement, to distinguish the head movement from XP movement, indicated with the strikethrough convention.

³² This structure also relies on insights of others, as the author notes, such as those of Bowers (1993), den Dikken (2006), den Dikken, Meinunger, Wilder (2000), Heggie (1988), Heycock and Kroch (1999), Mikkelsen (2005), and Romero (2005).

that is, the shell DP, undergoes fronting instead of the lower ([XP]) specifier, since the embedded structures are always obligatorily specificational, with inversion being absolutely required. This is illustrated by the constructed examples in 40 and 41, which show that noninverse order is not possible in the embedded clause of extra *be* constructions (unlike the matrix clause, as seen in the discussion around examples 20–24).³³

- (40) a. The problem is, is [that Laurent hates apples].
 b. *[That Laurent hates apples] is is the problem.
 (41) a. I made the point is [that Laurent hates apples].
 b. *I made [that Laurent hates apples] is the point.

Inverse specificational structure and meaning in the embedded clauses of SSNCs cannot simply be one option allowed due to equidistance and the circumstances of the derivational history. To implement the obligatory inversion in the extra *be* construction context, I adapt an idea from Mikkelsen (2005). Mikkelsen argues that specificational sentences are ‘only possible when favored by a certain distribution of certain features relating to information structure’ (2005:191). For her, in essence, T optionally bears an uninterpretable topic feature [uTop], and the complement of F can undergo fronting only if it has a [Top] feature and is thus attracted by the [uTop] on T. I propose here that in specificational clauses that are selected by a setup verb, T always has this uninterpretable topic feature, [uTop], and that this T selects a complement F that in turn selects a complement with [Top]. This implements the fact that setup verbs select specificational complements.³⁴ Thus, the strict requirement for the specificational meaning and inversion in the resolution clause in SSNCs can be accounted for through selection requirements stemming from the setup verb. This is shown below (with *be* merged in T, not CopP; see below for discussion). Each uninterpretable (u) feature is checked via pairing with the interpretable topic feature of the (complement or specifier) shell noun.

- (42) Topic feature selection: V_{SETUP} to T to F (for e.g. 41a)
 $[\text{DP } V_{\text{SETUP}} [\text{TP } \text{SHELL}_{[\text{TOP}]} \text{T}_{[\text{uTOP}]} [\text{XP } F_{[\text{uTOP}]} \text{SHELL}_{[\text{TOP}]}]]]$.
 I made the point is that ...

Let me clarify some assumptions. As seen in n. 13, I follow Heycock (2012) here (see also Heycock & Kroch 1999, 2002, Romero 2005, among others) in the view that the complement of a specificational sentence is not a predicate but an argument, albeit one with a heightened intensionality or less referentiality, leading some to consider it a predicate. This is crucial, since the same nominal clearly serves as an argument of the setup verb (e.g. *make* in 42) and semantically it could not simultaneously be an argument in one clause and a predicate in another. In addition, I adopt the view that theta relations can be established through internal merge: that is, an argument may receive a (second) thematic role in a position to which it moves (Boeckx et al. 2010, Hornstein 2001, Hornstein & Polinsky 2010). Finally, as noted above, I take from the literature on

³³ Not so possible in the main clause is lack of inversion with *that* (vs. *this*), as shown below in a constructed example, possibly due to *that* being anaphoric only (Calude 2008, Higgins 1979). But the fact that this is better for me if I add *precisely*, as in (ii), makes me think that (i) is not fully ungrammatical. (Note: *that* in (i) and (ii) is the demonstrative and not the complementizer.)

- (i) ?The problem is that, is we can't just turn up there.
 (ii) The problem is precisely that, is we can't just turn up there.

³⁴ I propose that the setup verb selects a TP with [uTop], which then selects an FP with a head F that selects a [Top] complement. In this way each selection is local. In the structure in 39, F is not immediately selected by T, since there is an intermediate COP phrase, but I argue below that there is no separate COP head in the *be*_{RES} structure, so we do not require long-distance selection.

shared arguments and secondary predication the idea that theta relations can hold between a verb and a specifier of its small-clause complement.

The presence of tense and agreement on be_{RES} is explained by the presence of T in the embedded structure. The specificational topic-focus semantics is related to the inversion, as forced by the selected [uTop] feature on the embedded T and the [Top] feature on the complement of F, as discussed above. The word order follows. Our analysis so far, if we adopt Heycock and den Dikken's structure for specificational clauses, would be as in 43. The main difference between this analysis and the one I in fact adopt, given in 33 above, is the presence in 43 of an extra CopP between T and FP. I now argue based on the agreement facts that this CopP, present in regular specificational sentences, is not present in the specificational resolution clause of an SSNC.

(43) SSNC STRUCTURE SO FAR (to be revised)

[I made [_{TP} the point F+ be +T [_{CopP} ~~the point~~ t_{F+be} [_{FP} [that he hates apples] t_F ~~the point~~]]]].

Let us return to the issue of agreement. Adopting the analysis of specificational sentences in 43 for the embedded clause in SSNCs makes the wrong prediction about agreement in such clauses, because it predicts that agreement for the extra be should be with the precopular nominal, just as it is in English regular specificational sentences.³⁵

- (44) a. The winner is me.
b. *The winner am me.

In other languages such as Eastern Armenian, Faroese, German, Italian, Persian, and Portuguese, however, agreement can at times be with the postcopular nominal, as discussed in detail by Bejar and Kahnemuyipour (2017); see also Costa 2004, den Dikken 1998, Heycock 2012, Moro 1997, and Rezac 2010, among others.³⁶ Heycock (2012) explains the postcopular agreement option in Faroese by assuming one less level of structure in copular clauses in this language; that is, she adopts a structure for Faroese sentences with postcopular agreement in which be lexicalizes T directly and there is no CopP, as in 45.

(45) Faroese copular clause (cf. Heycock 2012)

[_{TP} YP [F+ be /T [_{FP} XP t_F YP]]]

Faroese inversion is explained by allowing be/T to attract YP from complement position directly to specifier of TP. In this structure, given that Agree will target the closest element in its c-command domain, be/T will agree with XP, not YP; that is, we find agreement with the postcopular nominal. The difference here is that there is one less functional projection in the structure compared to 39 above, causing XP to be in closer c-command range for Agree than the YP that is targeted by Move. In 39, by contrast, YP (*the winner*) is the closest argument c-commanded by T once it has raised to specifier of CopP, and before it moves to TP.

For Heycock then, English precopular agreement is due to the fact that in English, be does not lexicalize T, but rather English has the structure with CopP in 39. She notes that in this case, we could see Agree as an operation that searches for the closest argu-

³⁵ It is possibly important that discussions about direction of agreement in copular sentences usually focus on person, whereas, for constructional reasons, agreement in extra be constructions is always for number, as discussed above. I do not deal with this issue here, though which features are involved in Agree could turn out to matter (Bejar & Kahnemuyipour 2017). O'Neill (2015b) also discusses agreement in such constructions.

³⁶ There are various accounts of this (e.g. Bejar & Kahnemuyipour 2017), but I follow the Heycock view of agreement for English and Faroese here.

ment in its c-command domain, or as an operation that works in tandem with Move, such that the element that is targeted for Move is always the element that agrees. In either view, the copular verb will always agree with *the winner* when it is in the specifier of CopP.

SSNCs provide evidence that it is the first option that we should adopt, since they show that it is not always the case in English that a verb will agree with the nominal that moves to Spec,TP, because in SSNC resolution clauses, agreement is with the postcopular clause, as discussed above.³⁷

Instead, we adopt the first idea above, that in normal English specificational sentences, *be* does not lexicalize T but heads a copular phrase below T. In this case, the structure for English specificational sentences will be as in 39 above, and agreement will always be with the argument that originates in the object position of FP and ends up as surface subject of T, the precopular DP.

We can now explicate why agreement is with the postcopular DP in case of the embedded specificational sentences in SSNCs. The claim is that in just such structures, English chooses the other possibility: that is, a setup verb selects a T that is directly lexicalized by *be*. This apparent upward grammaticalization of the copula, in TP rather than CopP, is likely related to the general truncation of the embedded clause from CP to TP and the erosion of the clausal boundary. Below we will see a case where extra *be* lexicalizes even higher, in C (and see also §5.3, and O'Neill 2015a,b, 2016). This type of *T/be* must be selected specifically by a matrix setup verb and is not generally available in English. Otherwise we would find English main-clause specificational sentences with postcopular agreement, which we do not. This selection of *T/be* will effectively turn English specificational sentences into Faroese ones, just in the case of SSNCs.

We have now arrived at the intermediate derivation for SSNC constructions, given in 46. There is one final fact to be brought into the analysis, discussed below, and this will bring us to the final analysis.

(46) SSNC STRUCTURE SO FAR (to be revised)

[I made [_{TP} the point F+*be*/T [_{FP} [that he hates apples] t_F ~~the point~~]]].

As already mentioned, part of the analysis of SSNCs involves exceptional case marking (ECM), as the shell noun receives accusative case from the matrix verb.³⁸ It is well known that in cases of ECM there is evidence that the object is not in the lower clause, since matrix adverbials can intervene between the ECM object and the embedded verb

³⁷ Note that in these sentences there is ECM of the embedded subject. It might be argued that it is just within such a scenario that agreement can take place with a different nominal from the one in specifier of TP, just as postverbal agreement can be rendered possible by dative or ergative subjects. This position creates a countercyclic situation, however, because the ECM accusative case arguably is not made available until after the lower agreement takes place. In addition, contact relatives, mentioned in §4.2 below (e.g. *I know a man likes salt in his beer*), show that embedded preverbal agreement can in fact take place with an argument that has undergone ECM. This argues that ECM itself is not responsible for the postcopular agreement found in extra *be* sentences. I also note here that ECM into finite clauses has been proposed for Japanese and Greek, among other languages, in Davies & Dubinsky 2007 and Massam 1985. In the present analysis, the clause is only partially a finite clause, since it is a TP and not a full CP.

³⁸ Of course there is no overt marking of accusative case on nonpronominals in English, but we can see that accusative is assigned to the shell noun via other means; for example, if the matrix verb is unaccusative, the shell noun object moves to subject position. Additionally, there is a required V+shell-noun adjacency, as between verbs and their accusative objects. In this discussion, of course, I put aside unaccusative setup verbs, which do not assign accusative case, triggering raising of the shell noun to matrix subject position, as discussed above.

(Postal 1974), as illustrated in 47a, where the adverbial is underlined. The same observation holds for SSNCs, as shown in 47b.

- (47) a. I believe him with all my heart to be an honest man.
 b. I made the point once before, is that we have to *work* on this committee.
 (McConvell 2004)

The adverb phrase *once before*, modifying the main clause, appears after what is proposed to be the subject of the embedded clause, which argues for an analysis in which this DP has raised into the matrix clause.

There have been several analyses proposed for ECM constructions, as reviewed by Davies and Dubinsky (2004), and several of these discuss the intervening-adverb issue. Here, I adopt the view of Johnson (1991) and Runner (1995), who argue that in English an accusative case-marked nominal raises to a specifier of VP or of a higher functional projection such as a light verb, *v*. I thus assume that the shell noun object moves to the specifier of a functional head in the matrix clause, and that once in this position it is within the matrix clause, explaining why matrix adverbials can occur after the shell noun. The verb also raises to a higher projection, yielding surface VO order. I do not take a position as to exactly which functional heads the verb and the object move to, simply labeling them as two different light verb (*v*) heads here. This observation brings us to the final analysis of SSNCs, given in 48 (repeated from 33 above).

- (48) FINAL PROPOSAL FOR THE STRUCTURE OF SSNCs (illustrated with type (i))

Type (i): I made the point *is* [that he hates apples].

[I T [_{VP} made [_{VP} the point *v*⁰ [ADV [_{VP} ~~made~~ [_{TP} ~~the point~~ F+*be*/T [_{FP} [that he hates apples] *t_F* ~~the point~~]]]]]]]]].

The structure of an SSNC of type (i) and, assuming a null shell noun, type (iv) is shown in detail in 33/48. Type (ii), in 15 above, and types (iiia) and (iiib), in 19 above, are slightly more complex, however, so before moving on, I provide structures for these sentence types, but in these structures I leave out the extra raisings to *v* required by ECM, for the sake of simplicity.

In the case of an unaccusative verb as the setup verb (here, setup *be*), the structure for a sentence with the template in 15 is 49. The embedded clause is a specificational clause with *be* lexicalizing T directly, as discussed above. Inversion brings the complement *the problem* to the subject position of the embedded TP. The main verb is a setup copular verb *be*, and I assume that setup verbs select a TP directly (and not an FP). This matrix verb is unaccusative, and hence *the problem* raises first to CopP, then to the matrix subject position.³⁹

- (49) PROPOSAL FOR THE STRUCTURE OF SSNCs (illustrated with type (ii), leaving out ECM movement)

Type (ii) (double *be*): The problem *is*, is the guy is an idiot.

[The problem *be*+T [_{CopP} ~~the problem~~ *t_{be}* [_{TP} ~~the problem~~ F+*be*/T [_{FP} [that the guy is an idiot] *t_F* ~~the problem~~]]]]].

We now turn to SSNCs of type (iii). First, 50a shows the structure for type (iiia) as in 19a. The embedded clause is the now familiar embedded specificational clause with *be*

³⁹ I am assuming here that setup *be* is more like a main verb, so that it selects a TP complement directly, without the need for an unaccusative F_{setup}. It seems plausible that setup *be* would differ from other copulas because setup verbs contain selectional meaning that is not present in their regular counterparts, such as the selection of a TP with a [uTop] feature. It is equally possible, though, to posit the existence of an FP below the copular *be*, which would also be unaccusative, allowing *the problem* to raise into the specifier of FP on its way to matrix subject position.

lexicalizing T directly. The shell noun *the problem* is merged as the complement of an F head, with the CP [*that he just doesn't care*] as the subject. Inversion occurs in the embedded clause. The setup verb is a (nonspecificational) copular verb with the subject *this* and the derived object *the problem*, and it does not trigger inversion; hence the specifier of CopP (*this*) undergoes movement to the highest subject position. In type (iib), shown in 50b, the higher F is specificational; hence it is the complement of the embedded clause that undergoes movement (inversion) to the highest subject position.

- (50) PROPOSAL FOR THE STRUCTURE OF SSNCs (illustrated with type (iii), leaving out ECM movement)
- a. Type (iia): This is the problem, is he just doesn't care.
 [This $be+T$ [_{CopP} ~~this~~ t_{be} [_{TP} the problem $F+be/T$ [_{FP} [he just doesn't care] t_F ~~the problem~~]]]]].
- b. Type (iib): The problem is this, is he just doesn't care.
 [The problem $be+T$ [_{CopP} ~~this~~ t_{be} [_{TP} ~~the problem~~ $F+be/T$ [_{FP} [he just doesn't care] t_F ~~the problem~~]]]]].

This concludes the analysis of SSNCs. In the next subsection I demonstrate the possibility for specificational chaining and extend the analysis to a related construction.

4.2. TRIPLE *BE*. In this section I briefly discuss the process of 'specificational chaining', whereby the setup clause and the resolution clause can be interrupted by an intervening unaccusative verb. As noted by Liberman (2011) and by Zimmer (2011), it is possible to hear triple *be* sentences, as in 51.⁴⁰ These can be analyzed as specificational chaining constructions, as shown in 51b, the posited (simplified) structure for 51a. Each clause contains a version of *be*: the matrix *be* is an unaccusative setup verb, and its selected *be* is also unaccusative setup *be*, which in turn takes a TP specificational complement. The third *be* is a specificational be_{RES} ; thus it takes a specificational FP complement. The two examples of selected *be* differ in their own selectional choices. This recursion further emphasizes the discourse roles of the components of the sentence.

- (51) a. ... and the thing is *is is* that this isn't Google. (Liberman 2011)
- b. the thing is [_{TP} ~~the thing~~ *is* [_{TP} ~~the thing~~ *is* [_{FP} [that this isn't Google] F ~~the thing~~]]].

Specificational chaining can also bring together different types of shared-argument or amalgam constructions, including contact relatives as in 52 (Doherty 1993, 2000, Henry 1995, Jespersen 1909, and Lambrecht 1988), to yield sentences such as 53a, analyzed in 53b.⁴¹

- (52) a. I'm the kind of guy likes to know who's buying his drinks.
 (from the movie *The shining*)
- b. You're the one thought psychopaths so interesting.
 (from the movie *Seven psychopaths*)
- (53) a. There's a couple of things have happened is we didn't get the numbers and we couldn't find the graphs.
- b. There's [_{TP} a couple of things] have happened [_{TP} ~~a couple of things~~ *is* [we didn't get the numbers and we couldn't find the graphs] F ~~a couple of things~~]].

⁴⁰ Both Liberman (2011) and Zimmer (2012) provide interesting audio clips of the triple *be* construction.

⁴¹ Lambrecht (1988) and Brenier and Michaelis (2005) specifically note that contact relatives are a form of amalgam construction.

I tentatively suggest that NSRC sentences like those in 54 actually do have a setup and shell noun, as in the structure below, and that these are null and are discourse-linked to preceding material. However, I note that it is not clear without further study whether this null material should in fact be considered to be syntactically present similarly to type (iv) SSNCs, with null objects.

- (57) [_{TP} Ø NULL-V [_{TP} Ø *is* [_{FP} [down south, if you have eighteen people great, you run a course] F Ø]]]. (Ø = a huge issue)

We do not have preceding discourse material for the examples in 54b,c, so we do not know if a discourse shell noun was available. If not, it might be that such examples rely on a default setup and shell such as *the thing is*. Perhaps supporting this possibility, we note that a null shell noun does not need to be identical in form to a discourse shell noun, as is made clear in the following example, where the shell noun would be something like *the difference*.

- (58) It's—I don't know- I don't know, I find things different now with a lot of people, *is* [they travel in ones and twos now]. (Tagliamonte database)

I have posited a null setup and shell noun in NSRCs, but Zwicky (2007) does not consider these sentences to have setups. He posits that *be* here has become 'a mere introductory formula for an assertion' or a 'sentence-initial assertion marker' (2007:6). It is possible that this view is correct, and that there is no implied setup material in NSRCs. In order to determine whether this is the case, however, further research of NSRCs needs to be undertaken, and this research must crucially make reference to their discourse context.⁴³

An important point as we move into the next section is that in all of the extra *be* constructions discussed so far, the XP that resolves the shell noun can include the optional complementizer *that*, as illustrated in many examples in this article. This supports the analysis in 57 that *be* in these last NSRC examples is a specificational copular verb taking a CP argument, even though the status of the missing shell noun and setup verb remains to be fully understood.

5.2. LINKING FOCUS *BE* CONSTRUCTIONS. There is one final type of nonselected extra *be* construction to discuss, illustrated in 2b in §1. This example type is quite widespread and heard frequently, in my experience. Sentences of this type do not contain a discernible shell noun, and a shell noun is also not present in previous discourse. However, the sentences do include a form of setup, namely a topicalized or scene-setting adverbial phrase, YP, presented in boldface in the examples below. The template for this type, which I call the LINKING FOCUS *BE* CONSTRUCTION (LF*be*C), is presented in 59, and further examples are provided in 60. (See also Massam 1999, McConvell 2004.) This is not a subtype of SSNC.

- (59) LINKING FOCUS *BE* CONSTRUCTIONS
 Template: YP, [*be* [XP]]
 Example: **If you put them in Lake Clarence,** *is* [they're just right there].

⁴³ There is a similar backgrounding of the shell noun as a referential element in its ability to appear without an article, as in (i), from Stvan 2014. Stvan argues that the shell nouns here have limited referring abilities and may be in the process of becoming pragmatic markers.

- (i) Thing *is*, and I have learned this from working at the—the, with the tribal people, the Coeur d'Alene people, [I never understood how important it was to know where you came from, because if you don't know, it sort of is like, you are just hatched out of an egg]. (Stvan 2014)

Note that since the setup verb syntactically licenses the shell noun, if the former is not present, the latter cannot be present either.

- (60) a. **You can still account for productivity**, *is* [you just need a separate level]. (Massam 1999)
 b. **For people who know me**, *is* [I don't like confrontations or conflicts]. (Massam 1999)
 c. **These are all good questions that you're asking**, *is* [you get one choice only and then you have to move on].⁴⁴
 d. Our kids are great on vacations but **when they come back** *is* [they need to play]. (Massam 1999)

As noted, these examples contain no shell DP, and, characteristically, alone among the extra *be* construction types, the postcopular clause cannot include a complementizer (at least not without a significant shift in meaning and prosody).⁴⁵ This is shown for one example in 61. This tells us that the postcopular clause is grammatically a matrix clause.

- (61) **For people who know me**, *is* [(**that*) I don't like confrontations or conflicts].

I propose that just in these cases, extra *be* is no longer a copular verb but is merged directly into a Focus position in the CP domain, where it serves both to link the left-peripheral scene-setting material to the following main clause, and to highlight or focus the following main clause. In these linking and focus functions, extra *be* here is similar to *be* in SSNCs, with a similar setup and resolution function, but in LF*be*Cs, it is no longer a specificational copula since there is no shell noun to be specified. I thus refer to this construction as the 'linking focus *be* construction' and to the extra *be* in such sentences as *be*_{FOC}. I propose the analysis in 62.

- (62) [_{FOCP} [_{CP} you can still account for productivity] [_{FOC} *is* [_{TP} you just need a separate level]]].

In 62, the copula lexicalizes a Focus head, thus forming part of the extended CP projection above the TP *you just need a separate level*. This analysis explains why the sentential phrase after *be* cannot contain *that*, because it is in fact a TP within a CP.

This analysis is also supported by the fact that *be*_{FOC} here, unlike the cases of *be*_{RES} discussed above, does not appear to bear agreement features or independent tense. There is nothing for *be* to agree with in these sentences, and indeed *be*_{FOC} is (to my knowledge) always third-person singular. There is also no evidence that *be* here needs to bear independent tense, since it appears to always be in concord with the tense of the main verb.

Summing up so far, LF*be*Cs differ from previous examples in not having a shell noun and thus not being specificational, in not allowing *that* in the postcopular clause, and in not exhibiting independent tense or argument agreement. Based on these properties, I have proposed that *be* in LF*be*Cs lexicalizes a left-peripheral head, one that is lower than the scene-setting phrase (e.g. *when they come back* in 60d). In fact, others too have similar analyses of the copular verb in some extra *be* constructions, for example, O'Neill (2015b), who investigates sentences like 11 above which also do not allow a complementizer in the resolution XP. In addition, Coppock and Staum (2004), den Dikken (2013), den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilder (2000), Dickerman (2009), Massam (1999),

⁴⁴ Here, the speaker was trying to deflect all of the questions and return the group to the main point.

⁴⁵ My judgment is that it is in fact possible to get a *that* in sentences like 60 and 61, but when I add it, it becomes a different construction, since it must then have different prosody and has a clear meaning of a nonselected *be*_{RES}. In such a case there must be an understood discourse shell nominal, and the sentence means, for example, (*the thing is*), *that they need to play*. If *that* is present, these sentences require a clear pause before *be* to establish that they are new utterances, not connected to the preceding YP topic, with nonselected *be*_{RES}, and that they are not *be*_{FOC} cases, linked to the topic, which is the default reading otherwise.

McConvell (1988), Tuggy (1996), and Zwicky (2007) propose that at least some types of *be* in extra *be* constructions might serve in a functional role, to topicalize or focus material, rather than serving as a copular or main verb.

This concludes my preliminary discussion of the two types of nonselected extra *be* sentences, which I have called nonselected resolution constructions and linking focus *be* constructions. As noted, many questions remain about these types, including the exact relation between them.⁴⁶ Here I have simply outlined possible analyses for future consideration.

5.3. A BRIEF COMMENT ON GRAMMATICALIZATION. Notably, the two types of extra *be* posited in this article appear in T and in a left-peripheral Focus head in the C domain. This suggests that the verb *be* has undergone a form of grammaticalization (Hopper & Traugott 2003), moving upward (Roberts & Roussou 2003, van Gelderen 2004) from the copular head to the T domain, then to the low C domain. It is beyond the scope of this article to examine this process in full (see Coppock & Staum 2004 and Stvan 2014), but it is worth pointing out that there are other cases of verbs in cleft-like constructions becoming left-peripheral items.

An important transition has taken place in the move from the canonical *be*_{RES} sentences to the *be*_{FOC} examples, which is that the focused resolution XP that is an embedded clause in a core extra *be* sentence has come to serve instead as the main clause. Tailleur (2013) discusses Laurentian French pseudocleft questions, arguing that in the history of the construction the balance has tipped so that the embedded clause in the Old French cleft question has become the main clause, and that the original main clause has atrophied into a left-peripheral (complex) head.

- (63) Old French (structure adapted from Tailleur 2013)
 [CP₁ [CP₁ Qui est chou] [CP₂ qui tient sa court]]
 who is it who holds his/her court
 ‘Who is the person who holds his/her court ...?’

Tailleur analyzes such structures as clefts, with the second CP right-adjoined to the matrix CP. She shows that this structure remained little changed throughout Middle French, but in today’s Laurentian French system, the structure has shifted so that the first CP is now left-adjoined to the second.

- (64) Modern Laurentian French (Tailleur 2013)
 [CP₂ [CP₁ Qu’ est-ce] [CP₂ que tu vois]]
 what is-it that you see
 ‘What do you see?’

Tailleur further argues that the first CP has atrophied, with *be* having no verbal properties anymore, to become a complex complementizer. Interestingly, here too we find seemingly vacuous iterations of *be*, so that it is possible to recleft the old cleft structure,

⁴⁶ I have proposed that there are two forms of nonembedded extra *be*, a nonselected *be*_{RES} with an understood setup and shell noun, which is a specificational copular verb, and a left-peripheral linking focus marker. But in fact, these two types are not always clearly differentiated, and there are examples that seem to fit in both groups. In (i), for example, there is a shell noun in a setup (*that was sort of the reward*) in the previous discourse, but there is also a scene-setting adverbial in the extra *be* sentence (i.e. *after we were done hay season*). This illustrates that the two subtypes are not necessarily distinct, and that further work is necessary before such examples can be fully analyzed.

(i) And then that was great. Um, and we always got to do it. That was sort of the reward for after hay-ing. After- Mm-hm **after we were done hay season** was [we got two weeks to go and play].
 (Tagliamonte database)

giving rise to examples such as the following in Laurentian French. Such examples are similar to the examples of specificational chaining that were presented above for extra *be* constructions.

(65) Modern Laurentian French cleft question (Tailleur 2013)

C'est qu'est-ce que tu vois?
 it-is what-is-it that you see
 'It is what that you see?'

Apart from these brief comments, I leave aside the interesting questions for grammaticalization and language change raised by extra *be* constructions in this article. This concludes our discussion of extra *be*, both be_{RES} and be_{FOC} .

6. CONCLUSION. One goal of this article has been to categorize the broad array of extra *be* constructions into two main types, based on their syntactic properties. The most common variety of extra *be* is be_{RES} , which is a specificational *be* merged in T. be_{RES} is most commonly embedded under a setup verb with which it shares a shell nominal, in the shared shell-noun construction, or SSNC. However, we also find cases of nonselected be_{RES} , with a null or understood shell nominal and setup verb, in the nonselected resolution construction, or NSRC. The second type of extra *be* is be_{FOC} , a left-peripheral linking and focusing head, which differs from be_{RES} in that it is no longer specificational, that is, it no longer links a shell noun and its resolution. Instead be_{FOC} links a scene-setting clause to a following asserted matrix clause, and it also focuses the latter. This type of extra *be* is found in the linking focus *be* construction, or LF*be*C. An important point in this article is that single *be* and double *be* are not in themselves different types of *be*; rather, most cases of single *be* can be collapsed with double *be*, with only one subtype (be_{FOC}) standing alone. Double *be* examples are thus identical to many single *be* examples, but they have the property that the selecting setup verb happens to be *be*.

The second goal of this article has been to provide a syntactic analysis of extra *be* constructions that captures their amalgamated nature, noted by many linguists, and does not require new types of grammatical entities or operations. Instead, the analysis relies on previously posited syntactic operations and structures, such as selection, specification, inversion, argument sharing, and exceptional case marking. Much work remains to be done on extra *be* constructions, in part due to their own rich and understudied properties and in part due to the fact that they rest on constructions such as specificational copular clauses, which themselves continue to resist full analytic consensus. It is hoped that this work contributes to the growing understanding of these constructions, even though it barely scratches the surface of the issues that they raise for syntax alone, much less for the interplay between syntax and information structure, prosody, and language variation and change, which have been fruitfully highlighted in the work of other authors on these constructions.

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