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1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the concept of *presentational focus* and examine its relevance in the Norwegian presentational construction (PC). The skeletal structure of the PC in Norwegian is [*expletive* V NP (PP)], exemplified by (1).

- (1) Det sitter [ei gammel dame]*focus* på trappa
there¹ sits an old lady on the staircase

The information structure in the presentational construction is associated with the introduction of an NP argument, which serves as the ‘presented’ focus. The Swiss linguist Knud Lambrecht notes that “the basic communicative function of such sentences is not to predicate a property of an argument but to introduce a referent into a discourse, often (but not always) with the purpose of making it available for predication in subsequent discourse”(Lambrecht 1996: 177).

The question of the presentational construction – also referred to in the literature as ‘existential-presentative construction’ (Askedal 1986), ‘impersonal active’ (Sveen 1996) and ‘presentational focus construction’ (Lødrup 1999) for Norwegian and ‘presentational there’ (Rochemont & Cullicover 1990), ‘existential sentences’ (Milsark 1979) for English² – has evoked considerable discussion in linguistic literature. On the basis of analyses of presentational constructions in English, French, Norwegian (and Swedish and Danish, which are very similar to the Norwegian PC), linguists have made a number of syntactic and semantic claims. One such claim is that the presentational construction is a syntactic diagnostic for unaccusativity. According to the Unaccusative Hypothesis (UH, Perlmutter 1978), there is a split between two classes of intransitive verbs: verbs that take an agent are called unergative verbs, while verbs that take a theme are unaccusative. According to this view, the syntactic effect is that unergative verbs take an underlying subject, and unaccusative verbs that take an underlying object. Thus in the linking from argument structure to syntax, arguments of unergative verbs are placed before the verb, while arguments of unaccusative

¹ As the pronoun *it* is generally not used in the English presentational construction and because it often has a referential usage, I translate all presentational constructions with the expletive *there*.

² See Aissen (1975) and Rochemont and Culicover (1990) for some structural differences between existential and presentational sentences in English. For functional differences between existential and presentational sentences, see Birner & Ward (1998).

verbs occur after the verb. The semantic and structural assumptions can be illustrated as in (2):

- (2) *Unergative verb* <agent> → NP [_{VP} V]
Unaccusative verb <theme> → [_{VP} V NP]

In response to this claim, a considerable amount of counterexamples consisting of PCs with unergative verbs have been attested, especially from the Scandinavian languages (Norwegian, Swedish, Danish) and French (Sveen (1996), Hulk (1980), Cummins (2000), Legendre (2003))³. Therefore, much of the previous research on Norwegian and French PCs has been concentrated on showing the wide variety of verbs that can occur in the construction, and thereby deny the claim that the construction is an instance of syntactic unaccusativity. Sveen (1996) in fact concludes that almost any intransitive verb can appear in Norwegian PCs. As a consequence of this, a problem arises concerning the linking of thematic roles to tree-structural positions and functions. This constitutes problem I.

Problem I: It is commonly assumed that the postverbal NP in the PC is a direct object (cf. Platzack (1983), Askedal (1986), Lødrup (1999)). For all linking theories, a central generalization is that agents map to subjects: they do not accept an argument which functions as an object to have the semantic role AGENT (cf. Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995). One apparent problem for a linking theory, then, is that presentational constructions with unergative verbs as in the Norwegian PC *det arbeider er jente i hagen* ‘there works a girl in garden-the’ or French *il court des enfants dans la salle* ‘there runs children in the hall’, contain agentive objects.

Solution: Various attempts have been made to solve this problem, most of them having to do with neutralization or underspecification of the argument (for example Sveen (1996) and Lødrup 2000). However, the one I am interested in has to do with information structuring, more precisely the *presentational focus* analyses of Bresnan (1994) and Lødrup (1999). In these analyses, the postverbal NP in presentational sentences such as locative inversions in English and PCs are driven by a requirement of realizing a presentational focus. The presentational focus is defined as the new information of the sentence.

Bresnan accounts for the fact that some unergative verbs occur in the locative inversion (*through the window on the second story was shooting a sniper*) by imposing a

³ In other languages such as English, the presentational sentences are still regarded as following the unaccusativity pattern, prohibiting agentive objects.

locative-theme structure (“presentational overlay”) on the argument structure, thus turning the agent into a theme. This construction is a result of the pragmatic requirement of presentational focus.

Lødrup (1999) employ Optimality Theory (OT) and argues that in Norwegian, the requirement of realizing the presentational focus is more important than avoiding agentive objects. Therefore, the discourse function of the NP does not turn the agent in a sentence like *det arbeider en mann i hagen* ‘there is a man working in the garden’, into a theme, as was the case in Bresnan’s analysis. Rather, the linking mismatch is simply overruled by the fact that the requirement of ‘realize P(resentational)Focus’ is ranked higher in the Norwegian PC.

However, while both Bresnan and Lødrup explain why it is possible to have unergative verbs in locative inversion and the PC, their theories do not explain why some unergative verbs are felicitous in the construction while others are not. This leads us to Problem II.

Problem II: Why are so many unergative verbs more acceptable in the Norwegian PC than in the French PC, given that they both allow unergative verbs?

The problem is that even if French seems to allow a rather wide range of verbs including unergatives, the amount of verbs actually used is nevertheless far from comparable with the range of verbs used in Norwegian PCs. In fact, in his master thesis, Torkjell Hanisch (2004) attests that the SPRIK corpus (University of Oslo) has almost no occurrences of unergative verbs in the French PC. He remarks that the class of verbs that can appear in the French construction is relatively fixed. The presentational constructions which are often cited in the linguistic literature are quite rare, and even unacceptable for many speakers of French (e.g. *Il mange beaucoup de linguistes dans ce restaurant* ‘there eats many linguists in that restaurant’ (Legendre 1990:88 citing Pollock 1978) or *Il a sauté beaucoup d’otages par la fenêtre* ‘there has jumped many hostages through the window’ (Legendre 1990:89)). So, even if there are many verbs that can, in principle, occur in the presentational construction (cf. Hériau (1989)), in practice they usually do not.

My hypothesis is: The different verb distribution in French and Norwegian is due to the presentational construction’s different communicative functions in the two languages.

The aim of my study was originally to analyse and compare the syntactic and semantic properties of presentational constructions in Norwegian and French. My main interest was the different verb distribution in the two languages, and the fact that they both have the possibility

to take so-called agentive verbs in PCs. In the search for differences and similarities between the two languages, at an early stage it struck me that the French examples seemed more restrained or tied up to one discourse function, namely that of presenting a new discourse referent, while the Norwegian examples often seemed to profile an event. For example, while French PCs are essentially NP-introducing, Norwegian presentational constructions not only introduce a new referent on the scene, but also have the opportunity to stress the activity denoted by the verb, as in (3).

- (3) det **jobber** faktisk noen her
there works actually someone here
'someone's actually working here'

Analyses that treat the presentational construction only as the presentation of an NP argument that constitutes the focus of the sentence, fail to capture these cross-linguistic differences between PCs. My aim in the present thesis is to fill this hole in the research literature.

The term 'presentational sentence' is used to cover a wide range of constructions including locative inversion (*From out of nowhere came the Emperor of Destruction*), stylistic inversion (*Alors sont entrés deux hommes* 'then entered two men') *have*-presentatives (e.g. *j'ai une camarade qui arrive*, 'I have a friend coming over'), cleft-sentences (e.g. *il y a une femme qui travaille dans le jardin*, 'there's a woman working in the garden' (lit. it there have a woman who works in the garden) etc. In the following, I shall reserve the term 'presentational construction' (abbreviated PC) to designate a sentence in which there occurs an expletive, and which is monoclausal (thus excluding the complex cleft-sentences, cf. Lambrecht 1988).

This study is based on the assumption that there are aspects of the grammatical form that require a pragmatic interpretation, based specifically on the notions *topic* and *focus*. That is not to say that all grammatical forms can be explained in terms of their communicative function, but that some linguistic forms more than others reflect the discourse function of the sentence. The presentational construction has often been defined as one such linguistic form in which the organization of the constituents can be said to mirror the information structure.

As I myself am not a native speaker of French, I have had to ask native speakers about their judgements of French sentences and to rely on the judgements made in other studies (e.g. Hanisch 2004 with his work on the French and Norwegian impersonal constructions based on

the corpus of SPRIK). In some cases, I have consulted my secondary supervisor Hans Petter Helland. As an aside, it is noteworthy that many of the French sentences that are used in the academic discussion about the unaccusative mismatch cannot be found other places than in various linguistic articles when searching on the Internet.

1.2 Outline of the thesis

This thesis contains five chapters. Apart from this introduction and a final chapter where I summarize the conclusions, the chapters are structured as follows:

In chapter 2, I present a short overview of general characteristics of the presentational sentences in Norwegian and French. The purpose of this chapter is to give an idea about how the different elements in the construction are organized and restricted. The structural properties of the PCs in the two languages are quite similar. The main difference concerns the verb distribution in the two languages. The most important part of this chapter is therefore the verb distribution.

In the first part of chapter 3, I present the theory of information structure and discuss various understandings of focus. This will provide a background for many of the discussions in chapter 4. In the latter part of this chapter I present two analyses which treat the postverbal noun phrase (PVNP) in PCs and in locative inversions as a *presentational focus*. The two analyses by Bresnan (1994) and Lødrup (1999) are carried out in the theory of Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG). Therefore, in order to make a background of their analyses, I will also present the theory of LFG. Bresnan's and Lødrup's analyses will serve as a point of departure for my own analysis in chapter 4.

Chapter 4 is divided in two. The first part deals with Norwegian PCs seen in relation to the concept of *theticity* and compares the PC with 'canonical' sentences (without expletive and with topical subjects). The main purpose of this part is to show that many of the grammatical properties often associated with the Norwegian PC are also characteristic of other thetic sentences, and that therefore the PC is not a typical PFocus construction. First, we will see that there is no predication relation between the verb and its argument in the PC and that the predicational aspect of the verb is not focussed upon. This is common for all thetic sentences. In 4.1.2 and 4.1.3, we see that the subject position entails particular readings of the NP and that the PC is different from other thetic sentences by having an "existential" reading of its argument. Finally, in 4.1.4, the verbs which are allowed in PCs are characterized as being *stage-level predicates*. These predicates, as opposed to *individual-level predicates* may

have an “existential” reading of their argument. Such verbs are therefore typicallythetic verbs.

In part two of the analysis, the suggestion that PCs in Norwegian arethetic without PFocus is further supported by the fact that the Norwegian PC has an eventive function which the French PC has not. This means that despite the obvious formal similarities between the PCs in French and Norwegian, they diverge in their communicative function. By examining the information structuring by means of phonological and semantic ‘weight’, it will be shown that the postverbal NP constitutes the most informative element in French PCs, but that this is not the case for Norwegian PCs. Finally, when looking at the ‘perceptive’ construction, we see that it is not crucial whether Norwegian expletive constructions have an object or not.

What I show in the two parts, then, is that:

- PCs and locative inversions are not functionally identical.
- PCs can have more than one function.

1.3 Delimitations

Since my main concern is the focus assignment in the sentences and its relation to verb distribution, I have not found it necessary to include a wider discussion of the function of the expletive or any purely structural accounts for the relation between the constituents.

Furthermore, the thesis is restricted to sentences with active verbs, so I have disregarded the impersonal passive constructions which are found in both Norwegian and French. I do not deny the possibility that these passive constructions may be valuable for the understanding of expletive constructions in general. The passive constructions share many properties with the PC, and a comparison of the impersonal passive constructions in French and Norwegian would doubtlessly lead to interesting results. However, the scope of this thesis does not allow me to elaborate on this question.

2 The Presentational Construction: An Overview of General Characteristics

This chapter provides a short overview of some of the main characteristics of the presentational construction (henceforth the PC) as it appears in Norwegian and French. Since the formal characteristics of the construction are quite similar in the two languages, I have chosen to compare them simultaneously. The most interesting structural properties of the PC around which this discussion will revolve are: (i), postposition of the NP, [V NP], (ii) definiteness restrictions on the postverbal NP, (iii) type of expletive, (iv) types of main verb, and (v) the presence of a locative phrase.

2.1 The postverbal NP

The PVNP is assumed to be an object⁴. The reason for this is among others that the PVNP cannot co-occur with a direct object, as illustrates the ungrammaticality of (3):

- (4) a. *Det spiller noen barn fotball i hagen
 there plays some children football in garden-the
 b. *Il mange des filles des pommes
 *Il mange des pommes des filles
 there eats girls the apples

However, ‘indirect objects’ or dative objects may occur in the PC (the indirect objects do not need to be indefinite)⁵:

- (5) Det ble overrakt dem sju basuner (www.bibelen.no/chapter15.08.05)
 there was handed them seven trumpets

(6) Il vous guette des renards... (Cummins 2000:235)
 there you-dat watch foxes

That the PVNP receives accusative case can be illustrated by () (the example is originally from Askedal (1986)).

- (7) Det vil alltid være dem som mener noe annet
 It will always be those-ACC who think something different

⁴ Arguments for why the PVNP is a structural object are found in Askedal (1986), Vikner (1995) and Lødrup (1999) among others.

⁵ In most cases, a PP construction is used:
Det ble overrakt roser til 2 av deltakerne (www.yttergryta.no 15.08.05)
There was handed roses to 2 of participants-the

The PVNP cannot be the subject in coordination⁶:

- (8) *Det arbeider en mann og plukker jordbær i hagen
There works a man and strawberries in garde-the

One common diagnostic for determining the grammatical function of the postverbal NP in French is the clitic *en*-test. *En* is a clitical pronoun. One of its functions is to represent the complement of a noun in the direct object position. The source of *en* must therefore be an internal argument of the verb:

- (9) Thomas a vu trois suisses./Thomas en a vu trois. (Cummins 2000:234)
'Thomas saw three chipmunks./Thomas saw three.'

There is no possibility for postposed subjects that agree with the verb in number, to be the source of *en*, yet is possible, even preferred in PCs:

- (10) Il en arrive deux
There of-them arrive two

It is often claimed that PCs disallow a grammatically definite NP, and this restriction has come to be known as the 'definiteness effect' (Milsark 1979). Thus, while the sentences in (4) are grammatical, the sentences in (5) are not.

- (11) a. Det kommer ei jente/ noen jenter
b. Il arrive une fille /quelques filles
there comes a girl/some girls
c. *Det kommer jenta/Marie/alle jentene
d. *Il arrive la fille/Maire/ toute les filles
there comes the girl/Marie/all girls

There are nevertheless some verbs that have a tendency to take definite arguments. These are especially verbs like *gjenstå/rester* 'remain' and *mangle/manquer* 'be left'. In addition we can find some instances with the copula *være* ('be').

- (12) a. Det var de vanlige spørsmålene hele tiden
there were the usual questions all the time
b. Det var aldri en slik/samme/den situasjon(en) i Norge

⁶ In the Norwegian reference grammar, the PVNP is denoted as a 'potential subject', one of the reasons being that it can be the subject in coordination:

Det står ei dame og drikker te

Strictly speaking, this is not an ordinary coordination, but a so-called pseudo-coordination. Only some verbs can be the first part of pseudo-coordination (for a detailed analysis of Norwegian pseudo-coordinations, see Lødrup 2002):

there were never such a/same/ that situation in Norway

- (13) a. Det gjenstår den medisinske testen og den personlige kontrakten for begge spillerne.

(home.c2i.net)

There remains the medical test and the personal contract for both players

- b. Det gjenstår den fundamentale essens: eksistensen, ånden. (www.galactic-server.com)

There remains the fundamental essens: the existence, the spirit

- (14) -Har du fått med alle?

-nei, det er/gjenstår/mangler fremdeles Per og Kari.

'-have you got them all?

-no, there's still Per and Kari'

- (15) Si l'on se détourne de la vertu, il reste la bonté. Lorsque la bonté est perdue, il reste la justice. (www.chenman.com)

If one turns to the virtue, there remains the goodness. When the goodness is lost, there remains the justice.

- (16) Il restait encore l'américaine Elizabeth McIntyre (Hanisch 2004: 61)

There remained still the American Elizabeth McIntyre

Moreover, French seems to have PCs with definite NPs that are not possible in Norwegian, as illustrated by the ungrammaticality of (17 b):

- (17) a. Il vint aussitôt la pluie et la nuit (Hériaux 1980:802-832).

b. *Det kom deretter regnet og natten

'there came then the rain and the night'

2.2 The expletive

It is a general assumption that the expletive in both French and Norwegian functions as a subject⁷. In both languages, the expletive is homophonous with the 3rd person singular neuter pronoun.

- (18) a. I går var det kommet inn 1600 underskrifter (google 22.03.2005)

yesterday was there come in 1600 signatures

- b. Hier il manquait un vote pour que ce soit la majorité (google 22.03.2005)

⁷ According to Vikner, the expletive differs from e.g. Icelandic and German expletives which are only found in sentence initial position. The difference becomes evident when the sentence-initial element is a topicalized element or a wh-element (Vikner 1995: 185). Whereas French and Norwegian must retain the expletive in the subject position (spec IP), languages like German and Icelandic cannot have an overt expletive.

*Gestern ist es ein junge gekommen

(Vikner 1995:185)

*I gær hefur Það komið strákur

Yesterday is there come a boy

However, at least German may have some expletive subjects, as in *es gibt keinen Wein*.

yesterday there was left one vote so that it would be the majority

Another property of the French *il* and Norwegian *det* is that they agree with the verb⁸:

- (19) a. Det er kome tre jentar
b. Il arrive trois filles
there came-sg three girls

- (20) a. (*)Det er komne tre jentar⁹
b. *Il arrivent trois filles
there came-pl three girls

In Norwegian, the expletives often occur after the verb (though in subject position).

- (21) Så sniker det seg inn en grusom lyd på radioen min
then sneaks there refl. in an awful sound on radio-the mine

This is also the case in French constructions with verbs of existence and appearance. Otherwise, this order seldom occurs in French.

- (22) Y-a-t-il quelqu'un avec qui je peux parler?
there have it someone with whom I can talk?
'Are there anyone I here I can talk to?'

2.3 Verb distribution in French and Norwegian

Only one-place and 'two-place unaccusative' verbs (24) are allowed in the construction. Transitive verbs are excluded, as illustrated by the ungrammaticality of (23).

- (23) a. *Det spiste en gutt et eple
b. *Il a mangé un garçon une pomme
there has eaten a boy an apple
- (24) a. Det hendte henne noe forferdelig
b. Il lui est arrivé quelque chose de terrible
there happened her something terrible

Most one-place verbs can appear in the PC in Norwegian. Sveen (1996) attests a wide range of intransitive verbs in the Norwegian presentational construction, some of which are cited below (example (a) and (b) are from Sveen 1996:78-80):

⁸ Vincent & Börjars (2005) argue that the neuter is the default gender in Swedish, so the fact that the verb is in neuter is a result of lack of agreement, rather than as an agreement with the expletive, which can also be described as neuter by default.

⁹ Agreement with the object is possible in some Norwegian dialects.

- (25) a. det stirrer en gutt på oss
 there stares a boy at us
 b. det svømte ei and under broa
 there swam a duck under bridge-the

- (26) Det kjører jo biler her hele tida (auth.)
 there drives yes cars here all time-the

Verbs which are not considered acceptable in the PC are those that denote non-perceptible processes, such as *tenke* ‘think’, *vite* ‘know’, *fryse* ‘freeze, be cold’ etc., (see Vikner (1995) who argues that experienter predicates are ungrammatical in PCs). Some other verbs which are commonly considered incompatible or nearly incompatible with the construction are:

- (27) ??Det sikler/tisser/spytter/strikker/fryser/spise/tenker/angrer/ klage/filosoferer/mediterer ei jente i stua¹⁰

I have tried to find some sentences with these verbs on the web without luck. I cannot thereby conclude that all these verbs are totally unacceptable in the construction, as I did not find verbs like *gråte* ‘cry’, *le* ‘laugh’ or *diskutere* ‘discuss’ either, which I myself find more acceptable. The importance of this list is that the verbs are considered unusual for the construction.

In French, many of the intransitive verbs found in ordinary Norwegian PCs are considered exceptions. While almost any intransitive verb in Norwegian can appear in PCs, this is clearly not the case for French PCs. Even though Hériaux (1989), Legendre (1990) and Cummins (2000), among others, have shown that French allows more unergative verbs in the PC than was generally acknowledged previously, the unergatives are still rather marginal in the French construction, compared to the Norwegian. Many of them are only used in written language. Many French PCs thus have a literary or formal flavour and people judge them accordingly, finding the sentences somewhat archaic.

A corpus-based study carried out by Hériaux (1989:245) shows that the three verbs *être* ‘be’, *rester* ‘remain’ and *exister* ‘exist’ make up the vast majority of verbs in French PCs (they accounted for 55% of the 14802 tokens. The most common one, *il y a* ‘there is’ was excluded). The next three most frequent verbs are *venir* ‘come, happen’, *arriver* ‘arrive’, and

¹⁰ This list is not meant to be exhaustive. The importance of this list is to give an idea of verbs which are untypical for the construction. I have not found any authentic examples of PCs with these verbs and people I have asked do not consider them as totally acceptable in the construction.

manquer ‘be lacking’. A corpus-based study of spoken French from 1956 shows the same kind of preference for verbs of existence and appearance (Cummins (2001:229). However, Cummins points out that this statistical preponderance of unaccusatives does not necessarily imply that PCs require unaccusatives. As Cummins says “Unaccusative verbs are quite common in general use [...] unergative verbs are less common” (ibid: 229). Still, relatively uncommon unergative verbs are listed among the 50 most common verbs found in PCs (examples include *courir, rôder, sonner*). Two sentences with unergative verbs are given in (28):

- (28) a. Il y dort une toute petite fille... toute petite! (perso.wanadoo.fr 18.04.2005)
 there there sleeps a very little girl...very little
- b. Il y travaille des spécialistes hautement qualifiés (www.visitor.ru/fra 26.02.05)
 there there works specialists highly qualified

Finally, except from the constructions with verbs of existence and appearance such as *il y a, il existe, il est, or il arrive* ‘it happens/there arrives’, the PC in French is typically a feature of written language with a rather literary flavour, and associated with a formal and archaic style.

2.4 The locative phrase

Many of the verbs in a PC require a locative PP. This is shown by the ungrammaticality that results from removing the PP (in parenthesis):

- (29) a. Det løper noen barn *(i hallen)
 Il court des enfants *(dans la salle)
 there runs some children (in the hall)
- b. Det kjører biler *(her)
 There drives cars (here)

Some verbs inherently encode location, and thus do not require an overt PP.

- (30) a. Det kom tre personer
 b. Il est arrivé trois personnes
 there arrived three persons
- c. Il est sorti un homme, qui ... (www.cesr.univ-tours.fr 17.04.05)
 There went out a man, who ...

Other verbs which do not seem to require a PP are verbs of existence (especially continuation of existence) or ‘lack’ of existence:

- (31) a. Det kan vel være det mangler noen titalls millioner... (www.hia.no 24.08.05)
 there may well be there is missing some ten millions
- b. Il manque beaucoup d'argent
 there is missing a lot of money
- c. Il disparaît trop d'enfants
- d. Det forsvinner altfor mange barn
 there disappears too many children

The PP in Norwegian is normally placed after the PVNP, but as illustrated by the sentences below, there are examples of postponed NPs in Norwegian as well.

- (32) Det ligger på bordet en enstemmig anbefaling fra styret i LO Stat.
www.lostat.no/Kartellnytt/mai_00/leder.htm
 there lies on table-the an unanimous recommendation from board-the in LO state
- (33) Det ligger på www en enorm mengde primærdokumentasjon [...] fra
 både kristne ... www.jesonline.no
 there lies on www an enormous amount of primary documentation [...] from both cristian...
- (34) Il prend forme dans ce laboratoire une théorie tout à fait nouvelle
 there takes form in this laboratory a theory completely new
- (35) Il circule toutes sortes de rumeurs horribles sur la region
 (www.caillouxaleatoires.free.fr/journal)
 there circulates all sorts of rumours terrible of the region

The locative PP in Norwegian occur after the post-verbal NP, while in French data shows a division between presentational constructions with NPs that occur immediately after the verb and those that are placed after the PP, a division not unlike the one found in English. In fact, nearly all the examples found in the Oslo multilingual corpus were of the [V PP NP] type.

- (36) a. Il ne venait de sa gorge que quelques gargouillements... (Hanisch 2004: 50)
 there not came from his throat just some gurglings noises
- b. Il vint de la terre un parfum, si bon et si suave... (ibid: 51)
 there came from the earth a perfume, so good and so delicious
- c. ...comme s'il lui venait à l'esprit quelque chose qu'elle... (ibid: 49)
 as if there her came to the thought something that she...
 'as if she had thought of something she...'

2.5 Summary

The postverbals NP occupy the object position and must be grammatically indefinite. The expletive is assumed to be a subject in both French and Norwegian and it agrees with the verb. When it comes to the verb distribution in the two languages, there is a big difference between what they allow in the PC. That is, even though both languages may have unergative verbs in the construction, Norwegian allows and uses a much wider range of verbs than does French. In addition, many of the “non-core” verbs (i.e. verbs which are rare in the construction or those which do not appear in the English PCs) in French only occur in literal texts, while Norwegian PCs are a typical oral phenomenon. Another difference is that in French PCs with non-core verbs the locative often appears before the NP, while in Norwegian, the PP always (with some few exceptions) occurs after the NP.

The facts presented above demonstrate the following similarities:

- Structure [expl V (PP) NP PP]
- Indefinite NPs
- NP agrees with the verb
- Various intransitive verbs are allowed in the construction
- PPs are often obligatory

and differences:

- Norwegian allow a much wider range of verbs than do French
- PPs often occur before the NP in French, they seldom does in Norwegian

The most important insights from this chapter is that the formal properties of the French and Norwegian presentational constructions are quite similar, but that the verb distribution in the two languages are quite dissimilar. The question is thus why. Why are so many more verbs allowed or used in the Norwegian PC than in the French?

Before I look into the difference between Norwegian and French PCs in section 4.2, I will present the theoretical framework which forms a basis for both my own analyses and the analyses of Bresnan (1994) and Lødrup (1999), and next I will discuss some semantic and pragmatic properties of the Norwegian PC.

3 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I discuss some theoretical issues that are relevant to the description and analysis of presentational constructions as well as some theoretical issues that are necessary for the understanding of Bresnan's (1994) and Lødrup's (1999) use of the presentational focus (henceforth PFocus). As I described in the Introduction, the aim of this thesis is to understand the concept of presentational focus and examine its relevance in the Norwegian PC. Since focus is a pragmatic term, belonging to the pragmatic level of information structuring, it is necessary to establish an understanding of the term *information structure*, and in particular the pragmatic understanding of focus. The issues that are discussed in section 3.1 provide the background for the analyses in chapter four, which rely on information structuring notions.

Next, in section 3.2 I will give some examples of how the interaction of information structure and syntax has been accounted for in Lexical Functional Grammar. The purpose of this section is to provide a background for the analyses of Bresnan's article "Locative Inversion and the Architecture of Universal Grammar" (1994) and Lødrup's "Linking and Optimality in the Norwegian Presentational Focus Construction" (1999). Since their analyses form the point of departure for my own analysis, I have devoted some space to present their ideas¹¹.

3.1 Information structure and the partition of the sentence

Much of the discussion related to presentational constructions centres around the area of grammar called information structure. The term *information structure* was first introduced by Halliday (1967:200), and is a component of grammar that has to do with the relationship between pragmatics and the structure of the sentence. The basic idea behind the concept of information structure is that communication takes place against a background of shared knowledge so that the way a speaker forms a sentence partly depends on the context in which it is uttered or written¹². Thus the information structure has to do with the relation between what the speaker assumes is known to the hearer and the structure of the utterance, hence the formal organization of 'new' and 'given' information.

¹¹ See also Morimoto (1999) who uses many of the insights from both Bresnan and Lødrup in the study of argument reversal in English, Sesotho and Setswana, and Kinyarwanda.

¹² As written language does not have the possibility of highlighting items by intonation, presumably, it is more dependent on word order to realize information structuring.

The relevance of information structuring in syntactic analyses is that syntactic constructions are often motivated by the various pragmatic requirements for the processing of information. The information structure is partially independent of the constituent structure since it does not necessarily correspond to the syntactic partitioning. Rather the distribution of *information units* (or message blocks) takes place on a distinct level, which correlates largely to intonational phrasing. When uttering a sentence, the speaker will divide the information into tone groups which highlight the most important parts. Conversely, the parts of the sentence that constitute the background or presupposition are deaccented, thus reflecting their status as less informative (intonation will be dealt with in section 3.1.3). This suggests that all the parts of the sentences have a discourse function; either they are part of the presupposed information or they are part of the new information.

Languages have different means to identify what is ‘given’ information and ‘new’ information in the sentence: it can be signalled by prosody, as mentioned above, morphology and/or word order. As for word order, the less informative parts tend to precede the new information (often referred to as *theme-rheme* or *topic-comment* structure), as in (37) below:

- (37) Hva gjør du?
-[Jeg]*given* spiser [grøt]*new*
‘What are you doing?’
-I am eating porridge’

In some languages, like Japanese and Korean, ‘new’ and ‘given’ NP referents are marked by different particles (cf. section 4.1.1). A given language may use one or more of these means to identify the most informative part of the sentence.

Since the PC is often considered to be an NP-presenting construction, driven by the ‘new’ status of the NP referent, I will use the next section to give an idea about the meaning of the pragmatic concept *focus*. This will provide a background for the discussions in section 4.2. Since the analyses in 4.1 rely heavily on the distinction between topic-comment sentences and “all-new” sentences, I will also explain what I mean by *topic*.

3.1.1 Given/New and Topic/Focus

A problem with the partitioning of the information structure is that the informational units of a sentence are often hard to define. This is reflected in a rather confusing terminology. Most of the terms are used by different theories in different ways. Notions that commonly appear in the literature are:

(38) *Topic/Theme/Old/Given/Background/Presupposition*

(39) *Focus/Rheme/New/Comment*

Confusion is caused by the fact that the notion topic is used with two different meanings – one in which topic corresponds to the ‘given’ information in contrast to focus which is ‘new’ information, and one in which it means what the sentence is ‘about’¹³. The difference between the two structures can be seen in the example below, where the information structuring of the sentence and its ‘aboutness’ do not coincide (Von Heusinger (2002:290) cites the example from Vallduví (1990)):

(40) What does John drink?

Topic **Comment**

John drinks beer

Background **focus**

While *drinks beer* forms the comment to an already established topic *John*, *John drinks* is the background to the focus *beer*. In part one of chapter 4 of this thesis, the emphasis is principally on the assessment of information structuring strategies which may alter the semantic interpretation, the topic-comment distinction. That is, the interpretation of quantifier scope and negation will be connected to the information structuring of the sentence. Therefore, both the topic-comment distinction and the distinction between pragmatic focus and background are important.

Following Lambrecht (1995: 118), I will define topic as “the thing which the proposition expressed by the sentence IS ABOUT”. Topics will thus always represent ‘given’ information. Topics are also necessarily part of the presupposition (see definition of presupposition below). Typically, the topic coincides with the subject in the clause, but in the framework adopted here, subjects may either be topics or foci. That grammatical subjects are not necessarily topics is illustrated by example (41) below (tonic prominence is indicated by bold types).

(41) Hva vil du spise?

Ananas hadde vært godt akkurat nå

what want you eat?

pineapple had been good right now

¹³ Yet another way of using the term topic is to denote those elements that appear sentence-initially before the subject, as in *Kari trodde han han kunne be* (lit. ‘Kari thought he he could bid’). This comes from transformational theory in which describes the NP as a topicalized constituent.

The sentence-initial NP is the intonationally most prominent element and represents the focus of the sentence. Therefore the grammatical subject is identified as the pragmatic focus. By giving prosodic prominence to the sentence-initial element, the speaker circumvents the information structure associated with the syntactic construction.

As for focus, an intuition shared by many researchers is that it has to do with the conveying of new information, or that it is the unpredictable element in an utterance which makes the utterance an assertion. The fact that focus represents the new information in the sentence is shown in three ways: (i) The focus is new “not in the sense that it cannot have been previously mentioned, although it is often the case that it has not been, but in the sense that the speaker presents it as not being recoverable from the preceding discourse” (Halliday 1967:204f). This type of focus is often called a *presentational* focus. (ii) It is new “contrary to some predicted or stated alternative” (Halliday *ibid*: 206). This focus implies a contradiction and is often called *contrastive focus*. (iii) The focus is new in that it corresponds to the information requested in wh-questions. This definition expresses the idea that the assignment of focus is determined by discourse and cannot be accounted for by purely structural terms or lexical-syntactic rules. In addition, it expresses the idea that all the constituents in a sentence can in principle be focused. For example, the constituent corresponding to the wh-element in *what did John put on the table?* constitutes the focus of the sentence in (42) (the example is from Choi 2001:19).

- (42) John put the **knife** on the table
Presupposition: John put x on the table
Assertion: x=knife

The identification of the missing referent completes the proposition in the question; the remaining material constitutes the presupposed or background information. Since information structure is highly context dependent, examples such as the one in (42) may have many different partitions according to the communicative purpose. This can be illustrated by a variation in question types:

- (43) (Where did John put the knife?)
John put the knife on the **table**
presupp: John put the knife x
Assertion: x=on the table
- (44) (Did John put the knife on the table?)
John put the knife **under** the table

presupp: John put the knife x the table

Assertion: x=on

Terms I will use to denote what is ‘given’ in the sentence are *activation* and *presupposition* (presupp). Activation refers to the mental access the hearer has to a specific element or proposition (Lambrecht 1996: 93). An activated concept is one “that is currently lit up, a concept in a person’s focus of consciousness at a particular moment” (Chafe 1987: 22ff). I will use it to denote the status of NP referents only. What makes the activation state of referents relevant for the study of information structure is that they are formally expressed in the sentence. As Chafe writes:

Those concepts which are already active for the speaker, and which the speaker judges to be active for the hearer as well, are verbalized in a special way, having properties which have often been discussed in terms of “old” and “given” information. The general thing to say is that given concepts are spoken with an attenuated pronunciation. The attenuation involves, at the very least, weak stress. Typically, though not always, it involves either pronominalization or omission from verbalization altogether. (1987: 26)

For example, “a pronoun is marked as having an active referent; a lexical noun phrase is unmarked for the activation state of its referent” (Lambrecht 1996: 98). In order to use a pronoun, the speaker has to assume that the hearer knows who the referent refers to, or else the utterance would be meaningless (if it is not deictic, as in *she did it*, uttered while pointing at some particular person). If a referent is active, it has been mentioned previously or is inferable from the context. A topic is active, as it always represents ‘given’ information.

When I use the term ‘presupposition’, it always denotes *pragmatic* presupposition. Lambrecht writes:

PRAGMATIC PRESUPPOSITION: the set of propositions lexicogrammatically evoked in a sentence which the speaker assumes the hearer already knows or is ready to take for granted at the time the sentence is uttered. (Lambrecht 1996: 52)

That a proposition is presupposed entails that it exists, not in the sense that it has to be true, but that it exists in the world of discourse.

3.1.2 Lambrecht’s three types of focus structures

Lambrecht (1995: ch 5) states that focus is a pragmatic relation, i.e. the focus is “that portion of a proposition which cannot be taken for granted at the time of speech”. Focus therefore is the unpredictable element of a proposition. Since focus is an element of information which somehow is added to the presupposition (either in the form of a preceding question or the general context), the marking of focus must be seen as the marking of the relation between the elements and the proposition. Lambrecht (1995) uses the term focus

structure to describe different information structure categories. There are three types of focus structures: *predicate-focus* (PF), *argument-focus* (AF) and *sentence-focus* (SF). In the PF category, which will also be referred to as the ‘topic-comment’, or ‘categorical’ type, the predicate of a sentence is focused and the argument is ‘given’. For example, in the utterance in (45), the proposition is divided in two: the car is already activated because it is mentioned in the question, and the fact that it broke down constitutes the new information, as suggested by the question.

- (45) What happened to your car?
- a. My **car**/ It broke **down**
 - b. (La mia macchina) si è **rotta**
 - c. (Ma voiture) elle est en **panne**

In the AF type, on the other hand, also referred to as the ‘identificational’ (Lambrecht 1995: 122), the argument is in focus and the predicate is part of the presupposition. This corresponds to the contrastive focus mentioned above.

- (46) I heard your motorcycle broke down?
- a. My **car** broke down
 - b. Si è rotta la mia **macchina**
 - c. C’est ma **voiture** qui est en panne

Both examples above have what has often been called a “narrow” focus. (Ladd 1996: 162) The narrow focus is distinguished from the “broad” focus, which may extend over several constituents or the entire sentence. This is the case for the SF category, also referred to as the ‘all new’, ‘presentational’, ‘neutral description’, or as we will see in 4.1.1, the ‘thetic’ type, where both the predicate and the argument are in focus. The SF type thus lacks a focus-presupposition articulation (Lambrecht 2000:612-614). Lambrecht (1996:233) writes “since the assertion extends over the entire proposition, assertion and focus coincide in these structures”. The SF type is used to report about an event or presenting a new discourse referent (Lambrecht 1996: 222).

- (47) What happened?
- a. My **car** broke down
 - b. mi si è rotta la **macchina**
to-me itself is broken the car
 - c. j’ai ma **voiture** qui est en **panne**
I have my car that is in breakdown

When comparing the different structures in English, Italian and French we see that they differ in their realization of information structure. According to Lambrecht (1996), the communicative intention is nearly identical for the three languages in all the three answers, but the languages differ in how the information structure is realized. While English, having the possibility to stress other constituents than the clause-final (the unmarked sentence-accent for all three languages is clause-final), makes use of intonation to mark the sentence as all-new, both Italian and French employ word order to accommodate the information structure of the sentence. The different ways of instantiating information structure are thus language specific.

However, as Lambrecht (1996:225) observes, the only focus-marking device which all of the languages have in common is prosodic prominence of a given syllable in the sentence: “This is no doubt a consequence of the iconic relationship between pitch prominence and the degree of communicative importance assigned to the focal portion of a proposition”. I will have something to say about focus and intonation in the next section. The pragmatic articulation of the three focus structures are summarized in table x. The difference between especially PF and SF will serve as a background for some of the analyses in part one in chapter four. There, the PF and SF will be related to categorial andthetic judgements respectively (cf. 4.1.1). Argument-focus clearly has more in common withthetic judgements than with categorial judgments, as it does not contain a topic. However, it is not important for the information structuring of the presentational construction.

Table 1 *Pragmatic articulation of the three focus structure categories*

	Argument in focus	Predicate in focus
Predicate-focus	-	+
Argument-focus	+	-
Sentence-focus	+	+

3.1.3 Focus and intonation

As we have seen in the preceding sections, the focus cannot be established based on linear order between the constituents in the sentence only. One additional factor which affects the information structure is the placement of stress or accent. Most languages use pitch variation emphatically to draw the listener’s attention to a particular element in the sentence. As Ladd writes: “It is generally understood that sentence accentuation reflects – in some way

– the intended *focus* of an utterance.” (Ladd 1996:160, italics in original). In the following I will only shortly give some examples of how the intonation and the information structure interact, or rather how the intonation reflects the information structure. I will in this thesis only be concerned with intonation inasmuch as it expresses communicative meaning, i.e. by highlighting the focus of the utterance.

Broadly speaking, we could say that the focus accent always falls on an informative element in the clause; thus, leaving a lexical expression unaccented signals that that constituent is part of the background. For example, in (41) above we noticed that the subject was identified as a focus, repeated here as (48).

- (48) Hva vil du spise?
Ananas hadde vært godt akkurat nå
What want you eat?
Pineapple had been good right now

If the subject does not bear accent, the NP referent will necessarily refer to something ‘given’, i.e. activated in the mind of the hearer. In addition to the activation state of the referent and the presupposition of the proposition, intonation may also point out what is intended to be the most important in the sentence. Zubizarreta (1998) illustrates this by pointing at the difference in stress assignment of the two German verbs *kommt* ‘comes’ and *getánzt* ‘danced’ in sentences (49) and (50) below. While nuclear stress falls obligatory on the subject in (49), in (50) it can fall either on the verb or the subject.

- (49) Es heisst, dass der/ein Jünge kommt
(50) Es heisst, dass der/ein Jünge getánzt hat

This reflects the different focus relations I presented above. If the accent in (50) falls on the NP, the presupposition is the following:

Presupp: x has danced
Assertion: x=boy

Conversely, if the accent falls on the verb, the scheme looks like this:

Presupp: the boy x
Assertion: x= danced

The verb *kommt* is then only used to focus upon the NP referent. As it is commonly assumed that there is almost an iconic relationship between the placement of focus and the placement of accent, I will use intonation to find out what constitutes the most informative

part in the sentence. Intonation plays a crucial role in determining the focus of the sentence in the Norwegian PCs. This will be especially important in 4.2.

3.1.4 Summary

The information structure is a component of grammar that has to do with the relationship between pragmatics and the structure of the sentence. Notwithstanding the terminological differences, the general idea is that the sentence is partitioned into two distinct parts which are motivated by certain pragmatic or communicative demands. One part of the sentence is new and one part is given. In addition, I will use the topic-comment distinction which refers to ‘aboutness’.

As for the focus, it is the informative part of the sentence and is highlighted prosodically. Lambrecht (1996) distinguishes between argument-focus structure (AF), predicate-focus structure (PF) and sentence-focus structure (SF). The different focus structures may have different syntactic structures. The unifying element is intonation. I assume that there is an iconic relationship between the placement of focus and the placement of accent.

Some general assumptions of information structuring (cf. van Heusinger: 127):

- The sentence is divided into: the focus and the background. The focus is often marked prosodically by a pitch accent.
- The focus constitutes the new material
- The presupposition represents given material
- Activated referents are topical

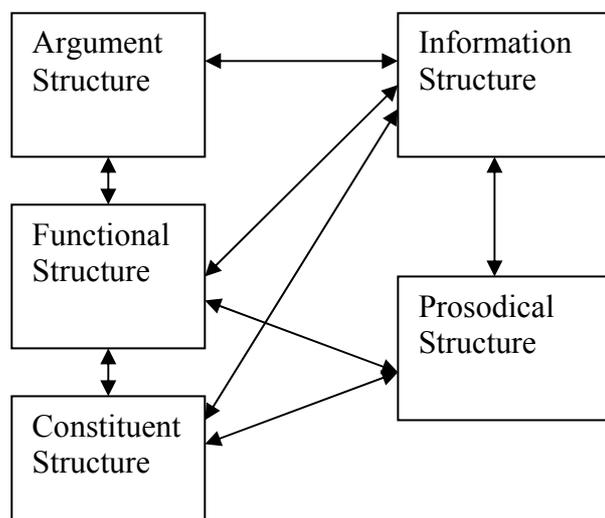
3.2 How to explain the interaction between information structure and syntax

In order to understand the analyses by Bresnan and Lødrup, and in particular their use of the presentational focus (PFocus), I will give a short introduction to the framework they use. In their analyses, the main concern is the interaction of the functional and the formal aspects of presentational sentences. The theory they apply is L(exical) F(unctional) G(rammar). The theory has a parallel architecture with a system of correspondence between the different levels of representations (Bresnan 1982, 2001, see also Falk 2001).

3.2.1 The framework of LFG

The theory of LFG is a non-derivational, constraint-based theory. This means that information can be added, but the existing information cannot be changed, as opposed to transformational theories. The different aspects of language (syntax, semantics, pragmatics, phonology) are represented as parallel levels of representation, each having their own internal rules of organization (Falk 2001: 22-25). Between these levels of representation there are correspondence functions which connect the different items of each level to each other. Table 2 is an attempt to show the correspondences between the different levels of representation. The levels on the left side are the grammatical domains normally considered to account for the syntactic structuring. These are the ones on which LFG traditionally have been focusing. The levels to the left are often associated with the ordinary meaning of the sentence, while the levels to the right represent meaning which is laid over the grammatical meaning of the sentence, thus having to do with pragmatics.

Table 2



The argument structure (a-structure) represents the thematic hierarchy. It only deals with syntactically relevant aspects of the verb's semantics, such as the participants in an event

designated by a predicator (Bresnan 2001:304). The a-structure represents an interface between semantics and syntax, mapping thematic roles with grammatical functions.

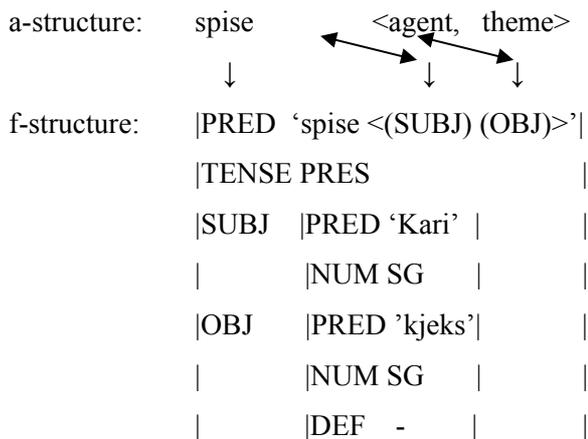
Thematic hierarchy: agents> beneficiary> experiencer/goal> instrument> patient/theme> locative

Relational hierarchy: SUBJ> OBJ> OBJ_θ> OBL_θ

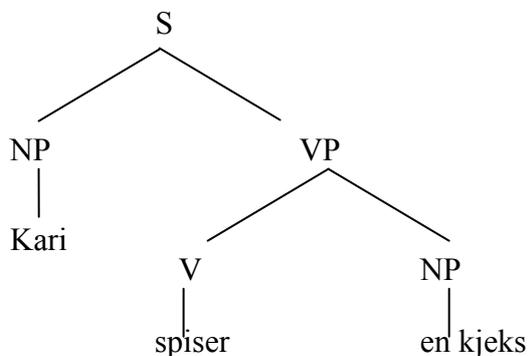
The thematic role hierarchy and the functional categories (subject and object) are associated with c-structural positions (outside and inside VP).

The functional structure represents the grammatical relations. In an attribute-value matrix (AVM), morphosyntactic features and grammatical functions are specified. It identifies the syntactic realization of the arguments based on their thematic roles, determined by the predicate.

The constituent structure represents the structural organization of words, familiar from transformational theories. Below is a simplified illustration of the syntactically relevant levels of representation of the sentence *Kari spiser en kjeks* ‘Kari eats a biscuit’:



c-structure:



The thematic roles *agent* and *theme* are associated with the grammatical relations subject and object which in their turn are associated with certain c-structural positions. The attribute PRED in the f-structure stands for *predicate* and denotes the semantic form of a particular word.

The mapping from a-structure to f-structure is in LFG known as the Lexical Mapping Theory (LMT). Prominent elements in both the thematic and the functional hierarchies tend to associate, so that agents generally occur as subjects and themes as objects. This then accounts for the tendency that arguments bearing certain thematic roles are associated with particular grammatical functions and thereby associated with syntactic positions. The roles are lexically underspecified concerning their mapping options to syntactic functions. However, as Bresnan (2001:311) points out, there exists a fundamental generalization that patient-like roles are mapped to either subjects or objects, while agents associate with the non-object functions (agents are inherently [-object]).

Based on this insight, the mapping is constrained by a-structure features. The features are i) [$\pm r$] which has to do with *restrictedness*; either a grammatical function is restricted to a thematic role or it is not, and, ii) [$\pm o$] which distinguishes object functions from non-object functions. Subjects and objects are unrestricted, as they are not limited to certain thematic roles, while second objects and obliques are restricted. Objects and second objects are both object functions, while subjects and obliques are not. This is illustrated by table 3 below:

Table 3

	[-o]	[+o]
[-r]	SUBJ	OBJ
[+r]	OBL _{θ}	OBJ _{θ}

The semantic classification of arguments is listed below (cf. Bresnan 2001:309):

Patientlike roles: [-r]
 Secondary patientlike roles: [+o]
 Other semantic roles: [-o]

An agent argument is thus represented in the a-structure as [-o] and consequently must map to SUBJ or another non-object function. Patient and themes, bearing the feature [-r], may

map to SUBJ I there is no agent, but maps to OBJ by adding the feature [+o]. Notice that it is only the argument functions that are represented in the relational hierarchy. In addition to the argument functions, LFG also operates with non-argument functions in f-structure, such as adjuncts and the discourse functions topic and focus. The discourse functions will be presented in the next section.

3.2.1.1 LFG and discourse functions

To understand the concept of presentational focus, I will give a short introduction of discourse functions in LFG. The discourse functions in LFG are non-argument functions represented in f-structure¹⁴. This means that the functions are not, as the grammatical functions, subcategorized for by the verb, they do not map directly to a-structure roles, rather they are laid over the argument-functions (Bresnan 2001: 96). This means that the ‘ordinary’ semantic content of a sentence comes from a-structure, and the arguments in a-structure can get an additional function in f-structure. There are two discourse functions: focus (FOC), expressing new information in the sentence, and topic (TOP) expressing old information (Falk 2001: 59). In addition to this, the subject in LFG functions as the unmarked discourse topic (Bresnan 2001: 98). The discourse functions have to be related to a grammatical function by which they indirectly map to argument structure.

An important distinction to be made concerning the conception of focus as understood in the present framework and the pragmatic approach I presented in Section 3.1 is the difference between grammaticized and not grammaticized discourse functions. Since, as Bresnan (2001:97) states, the f-structure in LFG is not meant to describe the pragmatics of discourse functions, they only denote the grammaticized functions, i.e. those that are syntactically or morphologically marked for a discourse function and “express relations that are relevant for discourse grammar” (Falk 2001:59). For that reason, in traditional LFG, the marking of discourse functions by means of intonation is excluded. Prosody has not generally been considered as being grammaticized, in a way that is relevant for the syntactic organization of the sentence¹⁵. According to this analysis, then, the relevant aspects of information structure are the ones explicitly reflected in syntax.

¹⁴ As new information does not necessarily correspond to an f-structural entity, in the current studies on information structure in LFG, suggestions have been made on how to deal with the pragmatic concept of information structure.

Some researchers have argued for a distinct i(nformation)-structure (Choi 1999) or d(iscourse)-structure (King & Zainen 2004).

¹⁵ The p(rosodic)-structure in LFG is rarely investigated, but see Rob O’Connor (2005).

To understand the LFG approach to discourse functions, it is necessary to give a short introduction of structurally defined discourse functions. In the structural encoding of discourse functions, a particular position licenses a particular discourse function.

It is generally held that sentences opens with ‘given’ information and closes with ‘old’ information (Birner & Ward 1998: 9). Therefore, the initial position, or the positions high up in the tree, is generally reserved to known information, while the focus usually occurs inside the VP (cf. 4.1.2 and Diesing 1992). Consequently, Diesing (1992) argues that arguments that are not part of the information focus must move out of the VP which is characterized as the focus domain. This implies that the focus reading is a property of the grammatical construction itself.

Even though the discourse functions in LFG are represented in f-structure, the idea of relating discourse functions to certain positions is also present in LFG (e.g. in Norwegian questions *hva har Jon drukket?* where the wh-element is the focus of the sentence). However, elements that do not have certain topic or focus positions may also have a discourse function. As an example of the discourse functions in LFG, we may again look at examples (40), repeated as (51):

- (51) What does John drink?
 John drinks [beer]*focus*

	PRED	‘drink	<(SUBJ)(OBJ)>	
	SUBJ	’John’		
	OBJ	’beer’		
	FOC			

The constituent that corresponds to the wh-element is the focus of the sentence. The discourse function focus is thus associated with the grammatical function object. Notice that the subject is not associated with the discourse function topic, as the subject in itself is the default topic, and the NP *John* occupies the normal subject position. This theory, then, differs from the pragmatic account of the discourse functions, which is the approach I am using, in that it does not use the term topic to refer to ‘ordinary’ subjects. In fact, if the sentence was not preceded by some kind of context (here a question), nothing in the sentence would have a discourse function. Therefore the sentence may either contain a focus or not. This is what is meant by the discourse functions being ‘overlaid’ the grammatical functions.

However, there are some sentences that are considered to be driven by the requirement of certain discourse functions. Locative inversion and presentational construction are considered to be constructions determined by the need to express the pragmatic relation focus (see Bresnan 1994, Lødrup 1999, Morimoto 1999). Two analyses of discourse driven constructions will be presented in the next two sections.

3.2.2 Bresnan's 'presentational overlay'

In her influential article on locative inversion in English and Chichewa, Bresnan (1994: 74) argues that “in English locative inversions there is no structural subject, the logical subject is a focussed object that does not appear in immediately postverbal object position, and the functional subject is an oblique PP argument that does not show any morphological or phrase-structural subject properties ¹⁶”. What does it mean that the NP is a focussed object? This is one of the questions that have led me to an investigation of the nature of the NP and the verb in the PC, which will be presented in chapter 4. The reasons why I have chosen to present Bresnan's analysis here is that it is regarded as an important contribution to the understanding of presentational sentences in general. That is, since locative inversions have a typical presentational function, they are often equated with PCs, both having a focussed postverbal NP. This is the position of Lødrup (1999), which I will present in the next section.

As Bresnan writes above, the locative inversion is characterized by having a PP sentence initially and having the logical subject appear after the verb, thus the structure [PP V NP] (see Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995: ch. 6 for a thorough discussion of the locative inversion and a different analysis). The construction is illustrated by example (52):

(52) a. Among the guests was sitting my friend Rose (Bresnan 1994:75)

The construction only occurs with intransitive verbs, though not all intransitives. “Locative inversion can occur just in case the subject can be interpreted as the argument of which the location, change of location, or direction expressed by the locative argument is predicated - a THEME [...]” (Bresnan 1994: 80). Consequently, the argument structure of a LI verb is <theme loc>¹⁷. Now, as we saw in the presentation of LFG above, patient-like roles may map to either subject or object and the locative maps to oblique by default. The highest-ranking argument in the thematic hierarchy maps to subject. However, as the PVNP

¹⁶ It should also be mentioned that the analysis of the NP-argument as an object and the locative as a functional subject is not uncontroversial and others treat the NP as a subject (see e.g. Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995: ch. 6).

¹⁷ This semantic restriction on the verb in LIs is similar to the restriction on verbs in English outer-there insertion (PCs with the structure [*expl* V PP NP], see Aissen 1975).

represents a presentational focus, the PVNP is not very likely to appear as subject (remember that subjects function as unmarked discourse topics cf. section 3.2.1.1). Bresnan defines presentational focus in this way: “[I]n presentational focus, a scene is set and a referent is introduced on the scene to become the new focus of attention” (ibid: 90). The solution to the conflict between presentational focus and subject function is to “make the locative the subject, for it can in fact be interpreted as the more topical argument” and “the object is the focusable syntactic function par excellence”(ibid: 90)¹⁸.

However, LIs allow some kinds of unergative verbs, as in (53):

(53) Through the window on the second story was shooting a sniper.

The problem is that these sentences contain an agent, and according to LFG and most other linking theories, agents map to subject. This is identified as problem I in the Introduction. Bresnan argues that “inversion is possible just when the shooting through the window serves to LOCATE the sniper” (Bresnan 1994: 84). But how is it possible to satisfy the mapping theory? This is where the ‘presentational overlay’ comes into the picture. Bresnan claims that a structure she calls ‘presentational overlay’, which consists of a <theme loc> structure, is imposed on the argument structure. As a result of the insertion of the ‘presentational overlay’, the agent role is identified with the ‘overlay theme’ (ibid: 91), as illustrated in (54).

(54) Lexical a-structure:	<i><ag></i>
Presentational overlay:	<i><th loc></i>
Functional structure	O S
	focus

The solution is thus pragmatically founded. The presented focus of the sentence overlays a <theme loc> predication on the argument structure of the verb, which makes the locative appear as a subject and the theme an object. Bresnan (1994: 91) also notes that an expletive subject can do much of the same work as the locative; inverting the theme so that the requirements of a presentational focus can be met.

The problem of this analysis is that the ‘presentational overlay’ does not restrict possible verbs that can appear in the construction. For example, if an unergative verb like

¹⁸ In addition to this, Bresnan (1994: 96-102) shows that the locative PP has important subject properties in form of constituent tests.

Lødrup finds the solution in Optimality Theory (OT). I will briefly present some of the essential characteristics of this approach below.

In OT, grammatical constraints are universal constraints which are violable and can receive different rankings in different languages. This idea is used to treat conflicting requirements between syntax, semantics and information structure (and prosody, see Choi 2001). This has the following implication: Even if a requirement of having a subject can be said to be a universal requirement, if it is ranked lower than a requirement of dropping topics (DROPTOPIC, Grimshaw, Jane&Vieri Samek-Lodovici 1998), it does not apply. This results, for example, in sentences like the Italian *ha cantato* (lit. have sung).

Since competing constraints can refer not only to structure, but also to functional, information structural and phonological notions, OT can also account for when the different word orders are preferred, as is the case for the constructions under discussion. The intuition is that different components of grammar are competing with each other for an optimal output, i.e. the best formal expression. These optimal outputs, which are a result of the ranking of the constraints, represent language-specific solutions. The winner may not satisfy all constraints. Rather, the optimal 'output' is the best possible output. Different rankings of the constraints in different languages result in different optimal outputs.

Returning to Lødrup (1999), the requirements discussed so far are, firstly, to have a presentational focus in object position (Realize PFocus). This was seen as representing the unmarked focus position (cf. Bresnan in 3.2.2). Secondly, there is the linking requirement of avoiding agentive objects. In addition, the information structural constraint Realize PFocus must compete with other constraints on argument realization; the requirement of a subject and the requirement of a thematic subject. As Norwegian allows non-thematic subjects in form of an expletive, the language has the possibility to insert this expletive in subject position. Lødrup (1999: 214-217) therefore proposes the following competing requirements:

Realize PFocus: The presentational focus must be put in object position

***Agentive Objects:** Avoid agentive objects

Subject Principle: The subject realizes the highest thematic role selected by the verb (if the subject is thematic)

Thematic subject constraint: every lexical form must have a thematic subject

In Norwegian, the first requirement (realize PFocus) is ranked higher than the requirement of avoiding agentive objects, and consequently unergative verbs can occur in

presentational constructions. The information structure wins and overrides the lexico-grammatical requirement.

Norwegian: Realize Pfocus>Subject Principle>*Agentive Object>Thematic Subject
Constraint

In a language where the requirement of having a thematic subject is more important than avoiding agentive objects, the optimal output could be a locative inversion (as in Kichaga, see Lødrup *ibid*: 218). The two different structures are illustrated below:

(57) [Det]*non-thematic* [arbeider]*unerg* [en mann]*ag-oj* [i hagen]*thematic*
There works a man in garden-the

(58) [I hagen]*thematic* [arbeider]*unerg* [en mann]*ag-oj*
In garden-the works a man

Lødrup remarks that there is another alternative for the description of presentational sentences, which has to do with a connection between the (im-) possibility of taking agentive objects and the possibility of locative inversion (Lødrup 1999:219-22). More specifically, languages with few or no restrictions on agentive objects in the presentational focus construction, like Norwegian and French, do not need a thematic subject, while languages with locative subjects, like English, must as the main rule have a thematic subject and do not allow agentive objects. There thus seems to be a correlation between allowing agentive objects and allowing non-thematic subjects. Lødrup further states that “the explanation for this tendency must be that most unergative verbs don’t select locative arguments” (*ibid*: 220). Many unaccusative verbs, on the other hand, take a locative argument that can satisfy the Thematic Subject Constraint. Lødrup’s conclusion is thus “if a language allows unergative verbs in its presentational focus construction, it has to allow a non-thematic subject” (*ibid*: 221). In other words, the decisive factor is whether a language can have non-thematic subjects or not. An underlying assumption is that in locative inversions the locative is selected by the verb, whereas in presentational construction, it does not have to be.

This analysis captures much of the general insights about presentational constructions. One of these is the fact that unergative verbs do not have locatives in their argument structure, whereas many of the unaccusatives do. However, as Lødrup notes, there are various problems with this analysis, especially when it comes to languages that have both expletive

constructions and locative inversion (e.g. English and French¹⁹). In addition, it cannot explain why some unergative verbs may undergo a lexical process that makes them take a locative argument, while others do not, and why this lexical process only applies in locative inversion and not in the PC, as in (59) and (60):

(59) On the third floor worked two young women called Maryanne Thompson and Ava Brent, who
ran the audio library and print room (Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995:224)
= *Work* <agent locative>

(60) Det arbeidet to unge damer i tredje etasje
There worked two young women in third floor
= *Work* <agent> + locative adjunct

The first problem corresponds to Bresnan's problem above. Moreover, why is this lexical process conceivable in only some languages? How can this theory account for the different degrees of acceptability of verbs allowed in one and the same construction, especially that between Norwegian and French PCs, as in (61)?

(61) Det løper noen barn etter meg (no.)
*il court des enfants après moi (fr.)
There runs some children after me

In order to answer these questions, some other questions need to be asked. These are:

- What does it mean that the argument is agentive?
- What is presentational focus, and do all PCs have this presentational focus?

Summing up, we have seen that both locative inversion and the PC are regarded as syntactic codings of the information structure. Put differently, the constructions are in part determined by the need to express the communicative purpose of the presentational construction. Languages that have locative inversion must have thematic subjects; languages having PCs do not need to have thematic subjects. Moreover, whereas locative inversions must have a locative in their argument structure, PCs are not necessarily subject to this requirement.

¹⁹ There is some disagreement as to how one should analyze the French locative-initial construction. Borillo writes that the locative PP in French serves as a reference point for the entity being introduced (Borillo 1999). They are thus pragmatically identical to English locative inversions, and I will therefore consider them as locative inversions.

Sur la place semble se dresser une cathédrale de feu (Marandin 1999:21)
On the place seems refl. stand a cathedral of ?

One of the problems with this analysis, which is the point of departure of the present thesis, is that it cannot account for the different verb distribution in PCs cross-linguistically, in particular between French and Norwegian. The nature of the presentational focus and its consequences, and the difference between Norwegian and French PCs, will therefore be the main issue of the next chapter.

3.1.3 Summary

In the second part of this chapter I have presented the theory of Lexical Functional Grammar. LFG was characterized as having parallel levels of representation which interact. We have seen that the thematic roles which are high on the thematic hierarchy are associated with grammatical functions which are high on the functional hierarchy. This results in agents being typically subjects and themes being typically objects. The mapping from a-structure to f-structure is restrained by a-structure features. According to these, agents may not map to object function. The object is the unmarked focus argument. The discourse functions in LFG are in the f-structure and are associated with grammatical functions.

Both Bresnan (1994) and Lødrup (1999) were presented because they use the discourse function presentational focus to account for the linking mismatch, identified as problem I. Bresnan introduces a ‘presentational overlay’ which turns the agent in a locative inversion into a theme. In addition it adds a locative PP to the verb’s argument structure. Lødrup, using Optimality Theory, states that the requirement of realizing a presentational focus is ranked higher than the constraint that prohibits agentive objects in Norwegian PCs.

The main problem with these analyses, which is the point of departure of the present thesis, is that they cannot account for the different verb distribution in PCs cross-linguistically, in particular between French and Norwegian. The nature of the presentational focus and its consequences, and the difference between Norwegian and French PCs, will therefore be the main issue of the next chapter.

4 Analysis

In chapter two, my main task was to present some of the formal characteristics of the presentational construction as it appears in Norwegian and French. In this chapter I will look at its usage. The chapter is divided in two. The first part examines the meaning of the PC as compared to other types of sentences, especially the so-called ‘canonical’ sentence type (without expletive), and thereby investigates some general intuitions about the semantic nature of the PC. In part two, I examine the pragmatic function of the PC based on a comparison of the Norwegian and the French constructions. In both parts I seek to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of presentational focus and what it means that the PC is driven by it.

In chapter two we saw that the NP has to be indefinite, the verb selection is relatively restricted and the locative PP is often obligatory. Why does the PC have these restrictions? Both Bresnan (1994) and Lødrup (1999) explain this by reference to presentational focus (cf.3.2.2 and 3.2.3). In Bresnan the Pfocus entails a theme argument in object position and a locative PP in the verb’s argument structure. In Lødrup, the Pfocus accounts for the fact that the argument must appear as an object, even if it has the thematic role agent. In addition, Lødrup has a lexical rule incorporating a locative into the argument structure of the verb. On the basis of this, we can say that the Realize NP-focus is used as a basis for an account of the following properties of the PCs (it should be noted that the relation between these properties and the PFocus is relatively indirect):

- Relative newness (‘definiteness effect’)
- Argument in object position (either agent or theme)
- Deagentivization (when the argument becomes a theme, as in Bresnan (1994))
- Locative in the verb’s argument structure

One problem has been to give precise restrictions on the verb distribution. As I noted in the introduction, it is now generally known that presentational constructions cannot serve as a syntactic test of unaccusativity because of the many occurrences of unergative verbs in the construction. In section 4.1.4, I will give one possible explanation to the restrictions in Norwegian, and in 4.2 I suggest that the difference in verb distribution in PCs cross-linguistically may be a result of various functions of the PC. I am going to argue that the

distinction between stage-level and individual-level predicates divides between the ‘presentational’ and ‘non-presentational’ verbs, and that this in turn can explain the difference between verbs that are allowed in a PC and verbs that are not.

Therefore the questions I will be concerned with in the first part of this chapter are what it means that the verb in the PC is deagentivized, what it means that the argument has to be indefinite, and finally, what kind of predicates can appear in a PC. By discussing the semantic effects on the predicate and the argument in the presentational construction in terms of theticity, I try to capture some of the intuitions in Bresnan’s and Lødrup’s analyses of the PFocus. In this part I am mainly interested in the relation between the verb and the argument.

In the second part, I use the pragmatic notion of focus to describe the different functions of the PC in French and Norwegian. In spite of the many formal similarities between French and Norwegian, as observed in chapter two, there is some striking dissimilarity in their verb distribution as well as in their usage, or communicative function. Based on this I split the construction into two functions: that of presenting events and that of presenting entities. It seems that the French PCs are in general restricted to the presentation of entities, while the Norwegian PCs more often emphasize the event denoted by the verb.

4.1 Why the NP argument is not a typical agent in PCs: semantic effects of the presentational construction

A common intuition about the NP in postverbal position is that it does not have the same degree of agency as the NP in the corresponding preverbal position. This is often called the ‘deagentivizing effect’ (see Lødrup (1999) and references therein). The effect has often been connected to the discourse function of the sentence, which is to assert the presence of a referent rather than predicating over it. Therefore, it is a common intuition that the verbs in PCs behave somewhat differently than when they appear in a typical topic-comment sentence; the meaning of the verb is not lost in the PC, but it is embedded into the sentence meaning, which is essentially that of appearance or existence, as illustrated in the following examples from Cummins (2000: 238):

- (62) a. Deux enfants restaient dans la salle
 ‘Two children remained in the room’
 b. Il restait deux enfants dans la salle
 ‘There remained two children in the room’
- (63) a. Deux enfants couraient dans la salle
 ‘Two children were running around in the room’

b. Il courait deux enfants dans la salle

‘There were two children running around in the room’

While the reading of appearance or existence is present in both of the examples with unaccusative verbs in (62), Cummins argues that only the b. example in (63) gives an existential reading. This means that the reading of appearance and existence is present for unergative verbs only in PCs. Since the reading of existence or appearance with unergative verbs does not occur in other constructions, Cummins concludes that the reading of existence or appearance is contributed by the construction itself.

This view of integration of verb meaning and sentence meaning is found in much of the literature on presentational sentences in French and English. According to Guéron (1980, cited in Cummins 2000:243), “the verb is pragmatically emptied of all semantic content beyond that of ‘appearance in the world of discourse’”. Lambrecht writes (1996: 181): “The agentivity of the predicate is subordinated to the presentational function of the proposition and the predicate is in fact pragmatically construed as non-agentive”. In a similar vein, Cummins (2000: 237) writes that the meaning of the verb “is grafted onto the meaning of appearance or existence in the world of discourse”. Others have proposed that the thematic hierarchy does not come into play for single arguments, which means that all one-place verbs take an unspecified argument (Hulk 1989:62). We saw in 3.1.1.1 that Bresnan (1994) tried to account for the deagentivizing effect by inserting a “presentational overlay” consisting of a theme and a locative. Similar ideas are expressed by Hoekstra & Mulder (1990), who argue that it is the context of a locative that makes the unergative verbs display properties of unaccusative verbs. The unergative verb does not assign an external theta role; it only takes a small-clause complement with a locative.

This views referred to above represent traditional views on French and English PCs. Is it possible to say that verbs in Norwegian PCs are deagentivized? If so, is it because it “is grafted onto the meaning of appearance or existence in the world of discourse”? I will treat the first question presently and the second question in section 4.2.

Lødrup’s (1999) answer to the first question is no (cf. 3.2.3): the verb is agentive, and Sveen’s (1996) answer is also no, with some modifications. Sveen (1996, chapter 4) argues that all intransitive verbs can in principle occur in the Norwegian PC, as long as certain semantic and pragmatic restrictions are observed. Furthermore, according to Sveen, the PVNP in Norwegian PCs retains its agentive status also in PCs, although the agentivity is “watered-down”. Sveen (1996:157-9), referring to Dowty’s (1991) concept of proto-roles, in which

arguments can be said to have varying degrees of membership, suggests that the agent in a PC (his impersonal active) has a lesser degree of membership in the proto-agent role type. Sveen talks about a “lessening of agency”.

The intuition is nevertheless the same for many analyses of the verb in PCs: something happens to the verb when it appears in a PC, whether it is in French, English or Norwegian. (For criticism of the deagentivization effect see Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995).

I believe that the reason that some verbs are more acceptable or frequent than others in the construction can be found in the concept of theticity (i.e. the argument in a PC is non-topical and the verb and the argument is not in a relation of predication), and in particular the division between stage-level and individual-level predicates. I also believe that the distinction between thetic and categorial judgements can explain the fact that verbs which usually take agents lack a truly agentive interpretation in some constructions. This presupposes a view in which agentivity is not only determined by the verb. Rather, the agentivity is based on the relation between the verb and its argument where the interpretation of the argument also affects the agentivity. Therefore, I will use the next three sections to explore the field of predication and theticity.

4.1.1 Predication and the distinction between thetic and categorial judgements

When I presented the theory of LFG I mentioned that this theory was largely concerned with hierarchies, one of these being the thematic hierarchy. It is common to speak of thematic roles when talking about what the verb predicates of. One-place verbs may predicate about an agent or a theme. However, in some cases, the classification of these roles is not straightforward and simple matter, as was illustrated above. An approach to predication that might be more fruitful can be found in the theory of thetic and categorial judgment. In so doing, I will use predication in the traditional logical way, as defined in *Oxford Compact English Dictionary* (1996): “1 *Gram.* what is said about the subject of the sentence. *Logic.* what is affirmed or denied of the subject by means of the copula.” The logical definition corresponds to what is called Aristotelian logic, which can basically be expressed by “A is B”, or “A is not B”. As will be shown in this section and the next, this only applies to NPs which are presupposed to exist²⁰. The treatment of predication goes roughly as follows: Definite, or strong, NPs generally enforce an interpretation in which their VPs are taken to be ‘predications’, that is, the VP is saying something about the subject. With non-specific

²⁰ The crucial aspect of a predicate in predicate logic is that it is true or false of one or more *particular* objects.

indefinites and bare plurals, on the other hand, the VP is a description of an event in which the referent of the NP has no topic properties (Milsark 1974 ch 6, Lumsden 1988, see ch 6). In this case, the verb cannot be seen as predicating over the NP referent, in the sense that it says something about it. The intuition is that one cannot introduce an argument and say something about that argument in one and the same clause. As Lambrecht (1995: 156) writes: “One cannot assess the information value and the relevance of a statement about a topic if one doesn’t know what the topic is.” These insights can be captured through the distinction between *thetic* and *categorical* judgmenets, which will be the topic of this section.

The distinction between typically topic-comment sentences and *thetic* sentences goes back to the nineteenth-century philosopher Brentano and his student Marty (see Lambrecht (1994:139))²¹. Having observed that not all sentences express affirmation or denial of some property of some entity, Brentano and Marty recognized two types of judgements: the *categorical* and the *thetic*. The *categorical* judgement is the one described above. It corresponds to the traditional topic-comment distinction. This type involves both the recognition of a subject and a judgment of what is expressed by the predicate about the subject; it therefore involves a “double judgment”. These sentences are logically complex, with an independently recognized subject. The logical structure can be represented as something like “{A is R(eferrent)} is B”. The *thetic* judgement, on the other hand, simply represents “the recognition or rejection of some judgement material, without predicating this judgement of some independently recognized subject” (Lambrecht 1994:139). This is often called a “simple judgment”. The logical structure is then “A is” or “A is not” (*there is food in the fridge, or there is no food in the fridge*). According to Brentano (1973), the basis for a *thetic* judgment is a presentation or a description of an object, either an *entity* or an *eventuality*.

According to Yuki Kuroda (1972), the distinction between *thetic* and *categorical* judgments is expressed formally in Japanese grammar by the particles *wa* and *ga*:

- (64) a. Neko ga asoko de nemutte iru
 The/a cat there sleeping is
 b. Neko wa asoko de nemutte iru
 The cat there sleeping is

²¹ Actually, the problem was discussed much earlier by Aristotle, but he did not arrive at the same division. For an excellent summary of some of the most important contributions of the discussions around *thetic*, *categorical* judgement, stage-level and individual level predicates, strong and weak NPs, see Ladusaw 3)

Example (92a), which contains a *ga*-marked NP, would be used to describe a situation, in this case the event of sleeping, in which a cat is a constituent in the event. The new information extends over the entire sentence and the argument is “subjectless” according to Kuroda, which in our terms means that the sentence is topicless. The Japanese topic marker *wa* marks the subject of a categorical judgement. Therefore, in example b., the cat represents the thing under discussion and the informative part lies in the predicate, i.e. what is said about the cat. As the cat in b. is a topic, it can only be interpreted as identifiable to the hearer (at least assumed to be identifiable to the hearer), hence it is grammatically definite (cf. section 4.1.2). Ladusaw (1994), interpreting Brentano, notes that the cat has a much fuzzier existence in thethetic judgement, because it is not directly affirmed, which basically means that it is not activated. There is only one affirmation, that of the description (‘A is’ or ‘A is not’).

What makes the distinction betweenthetic and categorical judgments particularly interesting in the context of this study is that thethetic sentences are seen as primarily presentational in nature. Lambrecht (1988) observes that thethetic *ga*-sentences attested by Kuroda (1972) are often used in the presentational function proper. Lambrecht’s opinion about the presentational function is that it serves to present a referent into the discourse which often has the property of being brand-new (cf. Lambrecht 1998 section 3.3)²². This is further supported by the Kuno’s (1972) observation that *ga*-sentences tend to be highly intransitive, containing verbs that indicate existence or appearance of some referent into the scene of discourse. These are also the verbs considered to be central in presentational constructions across languages. Needless to say, they are also the ones most often found in Norwegian and French PCs (cf. section 2.3).

Sincethetic sentences are presentational in nature, Lambrecht (1996: 181) remarks that there is a limit to the degree of agentivity a predicate can have in athetic judgement. Lambrecht gives the following examples:

- (65) a. **John** called
 b. **John** called his wife

While (a) can be understood as presentational, (b) cannot. Lambrecht notes that the transitive sentence in b. can only be interpreted as an identificational sentence with John as an argument-focus (where only ‘new’ elements tend to bear main accent cf. section 3.1.3.). That

²² The presentational function, as defined by Lambrecht (1988), thus also accounts for sentences which do not have a presentational structure (as PCs or locative inversion), but which marks the presentational function by intonation, as in *Mary has arrived*. In this example, Mary represents the new focus of attention and is presented or introduced into the discourse.

is, if someone inform you that ‘John called’, the most probable situation would be that neither John nor the calling has been under discussion. The information thus comes as all-new or all-focussed (cf. ‘sentence-focus’ in section 3.1.2). Lambrecht (1996: 181) writes that the utterance is a way of introducing ‘John’ into the discourse by way of mentioning the fact that he called. The purpose is not to convey information about the caller as an agent involved in some action. If such information was intended, then the fact that he called would be expressed with a pronoun ‘he called’, or, if he is not been immediately mentioned, then as ‘John **called**’, with accent on the predicate. In contrast, in the (b) example, the sentence cannot be interpreted as all-new. If someone utters, totally out of the blue, ‘**John** called his wife’, it presupposes that one knows that someone was to call his wife. Conversely, if the accent is moved to the object, as in ‘John called his **wife**’, then John has been under discussion already, hence he is not presented as ‘new’. The point is that in (b), the sentence does not express only new elements, and thus the sentence is not athetic expression.

Based on the fact that thetic sentences have a limit to their degree of agentivity, Lambrecht concludes that the predicate in (a) is in fact non-agentive (cf. introduction to this chapter). It is necessary to point out that in this view the verb is not seen as the only factor in determining agentivity. In (110 a), the verb is less agentive than in (110 b), not because of the verb’s argument structure, but because of the relation between the verb and its argument, which is essentially different in the two sentences. Thus the loss of agentivity in example (a) stems from the fact that the verb and its argument are not in a relation of predication in sense described above. If we accept this suggestion, which we will, then the logical implication is that only topic arguments are truly agentive. As will become clear in the next section, this means that only strong NPs can be said to be suitable agents. Since I believe that the thematic role agent can only be assigned to topics, calling the argument in thetic sentences “pseudo-agents” or themes is a more appropriate description of their behaviour, and more importantly, it distinguishes them from categorical sentences. Therefore, I agree with Bresnan (1994) in characterizing NPs in prepositional sentences, such as the locative inversion, as themes. However, while Bresnan uses her ‘theme- overlay’ only to account for the verbs in locative inversion, a natural consequence of the present approach is that all NPs involved in a thetic judgement should be analyzed as themes. Thus agentivity is determined by the discourse status of the NP rather than the verb’s argument structure. The problem with characterizing all non-topical NPs as themes is that it cannot separate between unergative and unaccusative verbs. Still, there may be another ways to describe and classify verbs which may reflect the

contrast between categorical andthetic judgements. The distinction that I have in mind is the one between of stage-level and individual-level predicates. This will be examined in 4.1.4.

Returning to the thetic sentences, there are essentially three ways of marking that a sentence is thetic. Above it was noted that Japanese distinguishes between thetic and categorical judgement through the choice of particle. In Norwegian, the contrast is marked by intonation or syntax. In short we can say that sentences denoting thetic judgements, favour accent on the subject, as in (66 a). By contrast, if the judgement is categorical, accent on the verb is more likely:

- (66) a. **Einar** kom
b. Einar **kom**

The example in (a) can either reflect a sentence -focus (SF), meaning that both the fact that somebody came and the fact that this somebody was Einar, is new to the hearer. Or it can mean that Einar, contrary to some other person, came, thus reflecting an AF (Lambrecht's (1996) argument-focus type which differ from thetic sentences by having a focus-presupposition relation between the argument and the predicate. cf. 3.1.2). The latter example focuses upon the predicate, which indicates that the fact that he (Einar) came was rather unexpected. An important thing to notice here is while the verb *komme* 'come' causes an "unexpected reading", other verbs may not get this "unexpected reading" when accented. This is illustrated in a sentence such as (67):

- (67) Einar **leste**
Einar read
'Einar was reading'

In this case the expected-unexpected contrast is reversed. If Einar was accented in (67), and the verb was deaccented, the fact that Einar was reading would not be expected. One explanation could be that the verb in (66) is unaccusative while the one in (67) is unergative. Another explanation is that *komme* typically is used to highlight NP referents, whereas *lese* does not have this NP introducing function. This again has to do with the verb's selection of arguments; if a verb typically favours topic arguments, it prefers to be the focus of the sentence, and therefore accented (cf. Lambrecht's (1996) predicate-focus section 3.1.2). When on the other hand the verb is often associated with non-topic arguments and often serves to highlight the argument, as with *komme*, the verb prefers to be deaccented (see also the example of Zubizarreta (1998) in section 3.1.3). I have tried to illustrate this below. *Contrastive* stands for contrastive reading and accounts for the "unexpectedness":

Table 4

<i>contrastive</i>	<i>unmarked</i>
Einar kom	Einar kom
Einar leste	Einar leste

The observations presented here also explain the contrast in Scmerling's (1976) often-cited pair of examples *Truman died* and *Johnson died*. While the death of Truman was expected, Johnson's was not. Thus the verb *die* behaves as *lese* above.

Now back to the reading of (b). There is also another interpretation of the sentence in example (b) in which Einar is coming sexually, i.e. having an orgasm. This reading is impossible if the verb is deaccented. Thus the intonation differentiates between word meanings. These two last readings reflect a predicate focus (PF).

The difference between thethetic and categorical judgments is often marked in word order. In a presentational construction, only two of the readings above are possible, that of SF and AF.

- (68) Det kom en telefonselger nå nettopp
There came a telephone salesman now

In this sentence the predicate does not say about an already active referent in the discourse that he came, neither can the sentence possibly mean that a salesman came sexually. Most probably the sentence would be uttered as all-new information²³. However, there is also the possibility that the fact that someone came is presupposed and that the NP referent represents the new (corrected) information, as in *nei, det kom en loddselger* 'no, there came a seller of raffle tickets'. The preferred structure of these contrasted sentences would still be a clefted construction, as in (69):

- (69) Det var en loddselger som kom
It was a seller of raffle tickets that came

²³ This is also the case for other presentational sentences. Lambrecht (1988) gives the following example for French 'presentational clefts':
Y'a Jean qu'a téléphoné
there has jean that has called
'John called'

We could say, then, that the shape of the presentational construction precludes a predication relation between the verb and the PVNP. The non-topical status of the NP referent is indicated by the structure (postverbal NP). Thus, the sentence below does not primarily say about 4,866 passengers that they were travelling. Instead, it introduces the passengers into the discourse by way of connecting them to an activity.

(70) I mai reiste det totalt 4.866 passasjerar over lufthamna. Dette er en auke på 2.036 eller 74% i høve til samme måned i fjor. (www.stordlufthavn.no 10.10.05)

In mai went there totally 4866 passangers over airport-the. This is an increase of 2,036 or 74% in comparison to same month in last year.

The pronoun *dette* ‘this’ in the following-up sentence, refers back to both the argument and the event of which it is part. Thus the sentence does not convey information about 4,866 passengers as agents involved in some action, in this case travelling. The purpose of this sentence is to inform about the numbers of passengers, just as the purpose of the sentence in (69) was to inform about the salesman. Lambrecht (2000: 623) writes “the subject referent is not conceptualized as actively involved in some situation but as appearing on the ‘scene’ of the discourse”.

The conclusion is that what really counts in describing the relation between the argument and the predicate in a PC is not whether the verb is agentive or not, but whether the argument and the predicate together form athetic judgement. The presentational sentences, or more precisely, the postverbal position of the NP, seem to result from the anti-topicality of the NP referent. The implication only goes one way, asthetic judgments also include non-topical referents in subject position. However, there seems to be a preference for having non-topical arguments in object position, as the subject position entails certain readings of the argument. Therefore, for a non-topic argument to appear in the subject position, it has to be intonationally marked, as is the case for many English sentences, as in *John called* or *Einar kom* ‘Einar came’²⁴.

A pragmatic account of thethetic categorical distinction can be schematized as in table x (cf. Lambrecht’s pragmatic articulation of the three focus-structure categories in section 3.1.2):

²⁴ The non-topic subjects may also be morphologically marked as with Finnish partitive subjects (cf. Kiparsky (1998)).

Table 5

	Argument in focus	Predicate in focus
Thetic	yes	yes
Categorical	no	yes

What the table means is that Lambrecht's (1996) sentence-focus structure corresponds to a thetic judgment, while the predicate-focus corresponds to a categorical judgement.

As a final remark on the contrast between thetic and categorical judgements, I will present some observations on the formation of informational units. This is because the thetic sentences, having a sentence-focus, restrict the possible predicates that can occur in the sentences. That is, some arguments and predicates form an informational unit more easily than others. The observation has been used to formulate the following principle by Jacobs (1999):

- Focus over predicate and argument presupposes a theme argument

What this means is that PCs, which are thetic and thus have broad focus, cannot contain agents. Cook (2001: 72) interprets this principle in terms of grammatical functions. She states that arguments that occupy a high position in the hierarchy of grammatical functions resist forming an information unit with the verb more strongly than those situated lower in the hierarchy (cf. section 3.2.1). This means that subjects are least likely to form an informational unit with the verb, and an object is consequently better suited. The difference is exemplified below:

- (71) what about Ann, what did she do?
 [Ann]*topic* [played baseball]*focus*
 What happened with the ball?
 #[Ann played]*focus* the ball (vs. Ann [played]*focus* the ball)

However, Cook does mention that "the behaviour of unaccusative subjects is different from that of regular subjects" (ibid: 72, footnote 17). With unaccusative verbs, the focus is often assigned to both the subject and the verb.

- (72) What happened?
 [Ann came]*focus*

This corresponds to our observations above in the sentence *Einar kom* ‘Einar came’. Cook connects this with how easily an argument may be informationally autonomous from the verb²⁵. Therefore, we can say that in athetic sentence, the argument and the verb are closely connected, not in the sense that the verb predicates over the argument, but in the sense that they together form an informational unit. Remember that in categorical judgements the subject had to be independently recognized. This, then, is because the argument has to be informationally autonomous.

What consequences do these observations have for the analysis of PCs? First of all it seems that many of the grammatical properties associated with the Norwegian PC can be seen in connection with the fact that it isthetic. Therefore, the “deagentivization”, or rather the lack of predication relation between the verb and the argument is not seen as unique for the PC. It is rather part of a more general phenomenon, that oftheticity.

In the beginning of this part of the analysis I asked if verbs in Norwegian PCs are deagentivized. The answer is yes. Yet, whether an NP or a verb is agentive or not depends on how one defines agentivity. It is clear that the verb *work* needs an agent doing the working, and therefore the verb can be said to select an agent. But this is on a fairly lexical level, totally independent of information structure. In contrast, what I am attempting to do is to describe the relation between the verb and its argument in terms of different focus relations. In a categorical sentence the focus is on the activity denoted by the verb (PF), which is a predication over an argument (*I am working*). In athetic sentence, on the other hand, there is no focus upon this relation between the activity and the instigator of that activity; the argument is seen as a mere obligatory participant or it is introduced via the activity (*there are a lot of people working in this department*). Therefore, to divide between the arguments inthetic sentences and those in categorical sentences, I prefer to call the PVNP a theme. Notice that this view resembles the analysis of Bresnan (1994. cf. section 3.1.3) where she argues that a ‘presentational overlay’ makes the agent of an unergative verb turn into a theme. In my analysis, however, it is *theticity* that turns the agent into a theme.

It is time to summarize:

- Brentano and Marty make a distinction between categorical andthetic judgements. The categorical judgement is logically complex (A is B), and thethetic is logically simple (A is).

²⁵ In addition to grammatical function, predictability of collocation also has an effect on the formation of information units (cf. Cook 2001). I will look at this in section 4.2.1.2.

- Kuroda (1972) notes that this division of judgement is apparent in the Japanese morphology, with the division between *wa* and *ga* marking. The first contains an activated subject, while the latter is defined by its anti-topicality (no activated subject).
- Lambrecht (1994) notes that the *ga*-sentences in Kuroda (1972) have a presentational function and links this to allthetic sentences in general. The distinction betweenthetic and categorical judgements is pragmatically described as a distinction between sentence-focus and predicate-focus.
- Cook (2001) claims that formation of information units (e.g. “broad” focus over verb and NP which forms athetic expression), correlates with the hierarchy of grammatical functions.

Based on the discussion so far, we can suggest the following correlations: the subject of athetic judgement is non-agentive and non-topical, while the subject of a categorical judgement can be agentive and is necessarily topical. In a PC, the non-topical status of the NP is indicated by the structure, i.e. the argument is placed postverbally, while a topical NP is in subject position.

Having established that there is no predication relation between the verb and its argument in the PC, it is time to look further into the nature of the argument and the predicate. The possibility of an NP for being in a predicational relation with a verb and thus to be agentive also depends upon the identifiability of the NP.

4.1.2 Weak and strong NPs

In this section I will first present some observations on NPs in presentational constructions made by Gary Milsark (1974) in his work on English existential constructions. The main purpose of this is to understand some of the meanings often associated with NPs in the PC. Among the relevant issues here is the restriction on definite NPs and the ‘existential reading’ in the PC. Next, I present Diesing’s views (1992), who translates some of the insights made by Milsark into a structural description. She explains the semantic effects on NPs in PCs with reference to their VP-internal position. This is important in order to understand the structural account of presentational focus.

In the following discussion of definiteness, I do not intend to give a full overview of the semantic and pragmatic accounts of the ‘definiteness effect’ in the PC (for this see Birner

& Ward 1995). My presentation of Milsark's 'weak' and 'strong' determiners is only part of an attempt to understand how the definiteness of an NP is related to stage-level and individual-level predicates andthetic and categorical judgement.

Milsark (1974) made an important semantic distinction by stating that there are two kinds of determiners: weak and strong. He observed that determiner phrases (DPs) can be given either a 'cardinality' interpretation or a 'quantificational' interpretation. Some DPs are unambiguously strong (typically definite nouns like *every*, *each*, *all* etc.), some are unambiguously weak (typically indefinite nouns) and some are ambiguous between the two (bare plurals, *several*, *many*, *some* etc.)²⁶. These are characterized by having both a specific and a non-specific reference. For instance, notice the ambiguity in the following sentence:

(73) Some unicorns entered

Milsark (ibid: 199) observes that there is an ambiguity between a reading where "an indefinite number of unicorns entered" and where "some of the unicorns walked in, but others, presumably, remained outside". Intonation serves to disambiguate between the two readings:

- (74) a. Some **unicorns** entered
b. **Some** unicorns entered; the others remained outside

Example (a), in which *some* is pronounced 'sm', only asserts the existence of unicorns. We are told that a number of unicorns entered. This, Milsark (1979) notes, expresses the cardinality of a set of unicorns. Example (b), on the other hand, with full pronunciation of *some*, denotes a subset of a given set and thereby presupposes the existence of unicorns, or at least presupposes that the unicorns have been previously mentioned. Or, to use Chafe's (1987: 22 footnote) expression, the item *unicorns* is an active concept in (b), which means that it is "currently lit up" in our consciousness. Thus the set from which the item is picked out has been mentioned previously in the discourse (or is somehow inferrable from the discourse). This quantificational reading of the quantifier tells us what proportion of the class of 'unicorns' the proportion is valid for.

²⁶ It should be noted that the grammatical marking of definiteness need not correspond to the cognitive category of identifiability, i.e. whether the referent is identified by both the speaker and the hearer at the time of utterance, although it usually does. A comprehensive discussion of identifiability and activation state is found in Lambrecht (1995: Ch3 pp. 74-113). For an extensive overview of the definiteness effect in Norwegian, see Vangsnes (1994).

Milsark writes that in the related ES (English existential sentence) only the first meaning is found, thus (75) cannot mean that “there are some unicorns, but not others, in my house”; it can only mean that an indefinite number of unicorns entered.

(75) There entered some unicorns.

Milsark suggests that it is a restriction against quantificational NPs in existential sentences that makes the construction disallow definite NPs (Milsark 1974: 200). Thus only a cardinality reading of the quantifier is possible in an existential sentence. It must be noted that when Milsark suggests that NPs in ES are unquantificational, it does not mean that they are unquantifiable. The conception of quantification can perhaps be understood better if we compare it with cardinal numbers as opposed to ‘normal’ numbers. While the cardinal numbers (one, two, three etc.) only denote numbers, the ordinal numbers, which are here compared with the notion of quantificational, denote an instance of a given set (first, second etc.). In that way, the unambiguously quantificational NPs are always interpreted as subsets of some presupposed universal set or category²⁷.

As in the English PC above (75), the natural reading of the Norwegian sentence in (76) is that an indefinite number of unicorns entered:

(76) Det kom inn noen enhjørninger (cardinal)
 There came in some unicorns

Yet in Norwegian, some PCs may have partly activated NPs, as illustrated by the partitive reading of (77 a). Not everybody finds this sentence acceptable, however.

(77) a. ?Det er **noen** av dem (men ikke alle) i hagen (quantificational)
 there are some of them (but not everyone) in garden-the

²⁷ Another way of distinguishing the ‘quantificational’ reading vs. ‘cardinal’ reading is to refer to ordinary predicate logic. Consider the typical Aristotelian syllogism

All men are mortal

Socrates is a man

Socrates is mortal

Now, in predicate logic, the syllogism is constructed like this:

For all x, if x is a man, then x is mortal.

The *for all x* part, represent the quantificational restriction. However, if the syllogism contains an indefinite quantifier as in

Guests are present

Lise is a guest

Lise is present

The third assertion does not follow logically from the previous two, because the first premise does not say of all guests that they are coming, it only asserts the fact that *there are guests present*. We lack the *for all x*. So, if Lise is a guest, it means that she might be one of the guests who are present, but she may just as well not be. Thus a weak NP cannot say about a group or an entity that something is true of all its instances, it only asserts the existence of the group.

- b. Det er 'non' av dem (?? men ikke alle) i hagen (cardinal)
 there are some of them (but not everyone) in garden-the

As *noen* in (a) is contrasted with *alle*, it picks out a specific entity or a certain number of a presupposed set. The sentence in (b) involves a contrast between 'somebody being in the garden' or not. Consequently, it is an affirmation of a description (cf. 4.1.1), and *noen*, pronounced 'non', denotes an indefinite entity of a presupposed set (i.e. a small or a large number of something). Thus, in (b), there is no real contrast to the presupposed set. When the DP consists of a quantificational *noen*, and a definite NP in the PP, it is barred from appearing in PC. Thus when the DP with a partitive reading involves the pronoun *dem*, (77), it is at least more acceptable than when it involves a definite NP as in (78), which is disallowed. The sentence is contrasted with the non-partitive reading in (b):

- (78) a. *det er **noen** av gjestene i hagen
 there are some of guests-the in garden-the
 b. det er **noen** gjester i hagen, men jeg vet ikke hvor mange/*men ikke alle
 there are some guests in garden-the, but i know not how many/but not all

Whereas the DP in (a) refers to a subset of a presupposed set of guests, the DP in (b) denotes a certain number of guests, without involving any contrast to 'all guests', thus inviting no partitive reading. The accent on *noen* indicates that there is a contrast of quantities, meaning something like 'some, but not many'. Conversely, if the *noen* is placed in subject position, it necessarily gets a specific interpretation:

- (79) Noen gjester er i hagen (andre er på kjøkkenet)
 Some guests are in garden-the (others are in kitchen-the)

Norwegian does not have the same possibility as English of getting an existential reading of quantifiers in subject position (cf. example (74) above).

Based on the observation by Milsark, Diesing (1992) advances the hypothesis that the interpretation of an indefinite argument is due to its syntactic position. That is, the tree-structure is divided in two: indefinite NPs occurring inside VP are bound by an existential operator ('existential closure', Milsark's (1974) 'cardinal reading') and those appearing outside VP receives a generic (Milsark's 'quantificational reading') interpretation. Diesing (1992) gives the following example with a bare plural, which can be interpreted either generically (quantificational reading) or existentially (cardinal reading):

- (80) Firemen are available

If the predicate receives primary stress, the subject is interpreted generically (all firemen are available), and if the PS falls on the subject it is interpreted existentially (we have some firemen here who are available, *there are firemen available*)²⁸.

- (81) Firemen are **available** (generic)
 (82) **Firemen** are available (existential)

Note however, that it is not only the interpretation of *firemen* in the above examples that varies. In addition, both the argument and the verb behave somewhat differently in relation to each other in the two examples. In the existential reading, the copula can be omitted, as is apparent in the Norwegian headings: *rom ledig, hus til salgs*, ‘room available, house for sale’. The generic reading, on the other hand, does not have the possibility of omitting the copula: **brannmenn ledige/tilgjengelige*. When the argument is interpreted generically, availability is one of the properties that are characteristic of firemen (*brannmenn er tilgjengelige* ‘firemen are available’). In the existential reading, the predicate only says that something is available, and in a second instance, that that something happens to be firemen. In this case, the NP is merely an instance of the predicate (*brannmenn ledige*) (cf. the difference between stage-level and individual-level predicates in the next section). The contrast can be illustrated by a contrast in information structuring by the focus variable x:

- (83) a. Firemen are x (generic: NP = topic)
 x=available
 b. x are available (existential: NP = focus)
 x=firemen

Thus in (83 a), *firemen* is activated and functions as topic, while in (b) *firemen* is not activated and functions as focus. The information status is reflected in the intonation pattern: the background information is not stressed, while the new information is (cf. section 3.1.3). Therefore, the focus subject in (b) must be stressed to express its function as not activated, hence the absence of topicality. This marking of the subject intonationally can also be seen in relation to the marked position of this constituent (cf. Aissen 1999, 2002). That is, since subjects are associated with topicality, non-topical subjects must have some sort of marking, in this case intonational, to differentiate them from ‘ordinary’, topical subjects.

²⁸ This insight is captured by Diesing (1992:20) in form of subject lowering at LF from [Spec,IP] to the VP-internal subject position [Spec,VP] for the existential reading, while as for the generic reading, the subject stays in [Spec,IP].

- b. det blir snakket to språk av alle her
there is spoken two languages by everybody here

Whereas the (a) yields a specific reading, meaning that everybody speaks the same two languages, no such specific reading of the two languages is present in the (b). Example (b) only means that everybody speaks two languages.

However, in the English ‘firemen’ examples above, the difference between the generic and the existential reading does not lie in structure, but in intonation. Therefore, it may be more useful to explain the difference in pragmatic terms. That is, the argument in (81) has the pragmatic function of topic, while the argument in (82) is non-topical. Notice that I do not say that the element in postverbal position is focus. Even though the position inside the VP (either internal subject or object) is associated with the discourse function focus (3.1.4), I will argue in part two that the PVNP in many cases does not function as a focus. Therefore, I find it more accurate to call the PVNPs in PCs non-topical.

To sum up, we have seen that quantifiers can have two readings, either quantificational or cardinal. NPs having an unambiguous cardinal reading are weak, NPs having an unambiguous quantificational reading are strong, and some NPs are ambiguous between the two. We have seen that PCs do not tolerate the presence of NPs which are interpreted as quantified sets, except for the partitive *noen av dem* ‘some of them’. The two different readings were explained by Diesing (1992) in terms of tree-splitting, where strong NPs occur outside the VP and weak NPs are placed inside the VP. This description seems to suit Norwegian well, as indefinite NPs tend to get a restricted reading in the subject position, and therefore the unmarked reading of indefinites are inside the VP. However, to cover both the English and the Norwegian examples, I argued that it is better to treat them in terms of the pragmatic notion of topicality.

4.1.3 The ‘existential reading’ in PCs

The purpose of this section is to show that there is a difference between the reading of the PVNP in PCs and the PVNP in locative inversions.

It is often said that the meaning of presentational constructions is essentially locative, and that the verb in the construction has a purely locative meaning. Lambrecht (1994: 179) writes: “It is also well-known that existential clauses often begin with a place adverbial, such as English *there*, German *da*, French *y*, etc, making the claim even more compelling that the presentational, location-oriented function of the construction is in fact the fundamental

communicative function of existential sentences”. If the locative-presentational function is indeed the only function of the construction, then we would assume that the presentational construction is motivated by the same requirements as found in locative inversion. In addition, as we saw in section 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, Bresnan (1994) and Lødrup (1999) considered the two constructions to be driven by one and the same information structural requirement, namely the presentational focus. In my opinion, both constructions are driven by the same requirement, but this requirement has to do with non-topicality. In addition, I believe that NPs in PCs are different from the PVNP in locative inversions by having an existential reading.

Let us look at the semantic character of the PVNP in the PC and in the locative inversion. First, consider the following ungrammatical sentence:

- (87) *det ligger Mari i hagen
 there lies Mari in the garden

The peculiar reading of course stems from the fact that the sentence is ill-formed, but the interesting thing is that the sentence could be perfectly acceptable if *Mari* referred to a set or type of something. This something could be flowers or insects and Mari would then be the name of the category or set of these things. Moreover, if we say that there is one Mari in the garden, it means that there is one instance of the category Mari in the garden, and not a girl named Mari. The PC denotes only a category, i.e. only the set (in which there may be specific instances). It is very unlikely that Mari in this case is an instance of the category “girls named Mari”, as proper names refers to specific individuals³⁰. The sentence in (87) fails to assert the existence and location of a ‘female human’ named Mari, no matter how ‘new’ in the discourse Mari may be. This is not the case with locative inversions, as illustrated by the grammaticality of the sentence in (88 a)³¹:

- (88) a. Among the guests was sitting my friend Rose (Bresnan 1994:75)
 b. * Among the guests there was sitting my friend Rose
 c. * Among the guests there was sitting Rose

³⁰ The two readings of weak NPs are often separated by the concept of ‘specificity’. The general intuition is that when the NP is interpreted specifically, the speaker has a particular referent in mind, whereas in a non-specific reading she does not.

³¹ Ward & Birner (1998:158) show that there are functional differences between locative inversion and there-insertion in English:

- a. To the left of the altar one of the big wall panels with rounded tops opens, it is a secret door like in a horror movie, and *out of it steps Archie Campbell in a black cassock and white surplice and stole.*
 b. #[...] *out of it there steps Archie Campbell in a black cassock and white surplice and stole.*

In this context, the PC is not felicitous. For other differences between the two construction, see also Bolinger (1977).

In a locative inversion, the NP is presented as relatively new in the discourse (Ward & Birner 1998) and functions as a presented focus (Bresnan 1994). Another characteristic of locative inversion is that the preposed locative is a topic (cf. section 3.2.2). The function of a locative inversion is to present an NP by anchoring it to a location. For example, French also has a kind of locative inversion akin to locative inversion in English. As in English, the sentence below cannot be the answer to the question *ou se trouvait un magnétophone*, as the locative PP then would function as focus:

(89) *[Sur la table]*focus* se trouvait un magnétophone (Jones 1996:468)

On the table refl-found a magnetophone

(90) [Sur la table]*topic* se trouvait [un magnétophone]*focus* (Jones 1996:468)

On the table refl-se found a magnetophone

Notice that in the Norwegian PC, the locative is often part of the new information, as in (92):

(91) Hvor er hanskene mine?

'Where are my gloves?'

(92) Det lå noen på bordet

there lay some on table-the

'there were a pair on the table'

In the LI, the new information is necessarily provided by the PVNP. The locative inversion and the PC then seem to differ according to what they can focus upon; locative inversion involves a focused NP-referent and topic locative, while the PCs may have focussed locative PPs.

Returning to the example in (88), we see that the locative inversion does not entail an 'existence reading' of its NP, in form of a non-specific category reading. Notice also that graded quantities, being inherently non-specific, cannot occur in locative inversion:

(93) a. ...but wouldn't it be better therefore if they were spread out and there were less in each chatroom? (whodunit.planet-science.com 17.11.2005)

b. *in each chatroom were less

c. *In the living-room are few

As the pronoun *less* only means 'of smaller number', the adverb cannot pick out a specific group. The explanation to why locative inversion does not entail an existential reading presumably has something to do with its function. It only serves to present an NP

referent by locating it to a ‘given’ place. A NP-presenting PC does not only present an NP referent. It also asserts the existence of this referent (as implied by Diesing’s (1992) ‘existential’ closure). The contrast between the LI and the PC seems to be that PCs only allow weak NPs, while LIs allow both strong and weak NPs. However, both constructions arethetic, neither of them allows topic NPs. As for the locative inversion, this is seen by the pronominal restriction for PFocus (Bresnan 1994: 86):

(94) *Rose_i? Among the guests of honor was sitting she_i/ her_i

This is a general restriction forthetic sentences, as pronouns are necessarily topics (cf. 3.1.1, pronouns are marked for activeness). Deictic use of pronouns is acceptable. In that case the pronouns stand in a focus relation with the proposition, as in *Among the guests of honor was sitting her* [pointing] (ibid: 86) and *he called*.

Thus, as there is a limit to the amount of agentivity a predicate can have in athetic judgment (cf. section 4.1.1), there is also a limit to the degree of definiteness of the argument.

I believe that the fact that PCs only allow weak NPs (though see 4.1.2 for partitive reading), while LIs allow both weak and some strong NPs account for the different restrictions on definiteness. Put differently, strong NPs as proper names refer to a person who most probably is identifiable for the addressee, which means that it is highly definite. Weak NPs, on the other hand, are characterized by not being presupposed (Diesing 1992) and thereby the existence of the NP referent is not presupposed by the addressee. The speaker thus has to create a representation of the entity via a linguistic description. This is done by using an indefinite NP.

The conclusion is, then, that the apparent existential reading which is found in PCs in the form of a non-specific category reading separates it from locative inversion. PCs only allow weak NPs, while LIs allow both weak and strong NPs. The two constructions have in common that they arethetic. This shows that the claim that PCs and LIs are driven by the same motivation, i.e. the presentational focus, may be problematic.

4.1.4 Stage- level and individual-level predicates

In this section I will try to draw some lines between verbs that can occur inthetic sentences and those which can occur in the Norwegian PC. If it is the case that the verbs allowed in Norwegian PCs correspond to verbs generally found inthetic sentences, then we have yet another argument for the claim that Norwegian PCs are not necessarily driven by a PFocus. As we saw in 4.1.1, the basis for athetic judgement is a description, either of an

entity or of an eventuality (c.f. Brentano (1973), section 4.1.1). Therefore, if the verbs found in Norwegian PCs are the same as the verbs found in thesethetic sentences (describing entities *and* eventualities), then the claim that PCs only present entities seems rather weak. Based on the relations between the stage-level (SLP) predicates and individual-level (ILP) predicates and modes of judgements in Ladusaw (1994), there is a correlation between stage-level predicates andthetic sentences.

Stage-level predicates are characterized as expressing temporary or accidental properties; they may take either a weak or a strong DP; and they can be combined with locative modifiers³². The similarity between stage-level predicates and verbs appearing in the PC is that they denote a description of an eventuality and that they may have a weak DP. Thus the SLPs do not necessarily predicate over a particular NP referent, in the sense of saying something about someone. I believe that the verbs can be classified as those taking topics (ILPs), those taking non-topics (SLPs) and those ambiguous between the two (SLPs).

Milsark (1974: 210) makes a distinction between predicates that typically favour strong DPs and predicates that allow for weak DPs. He divides one-place predicates in two: those which express ‘properties’ and those which express ‘state descriptions’. The predicates have later become known as individual-level and stage-level predicates (Carlson 1977)³³, for ‘properties’ and ‘state description’ respectively. Milsark observed that some adjectives were tolerated in the existential sentences (ES), while others were not (ibid: 211 and 214).

- (95) a. *There are too many people boring
 b. There were sm people sick (Milsark distinguishes weak ‘sm’ from strong ‘some’, based on its pronunciation)

³² It is commonly supposed that SLPs but not ILPs combine with locatives. A semantic and syntactic account of this behaviour is advanced by Kratzer (1995). She distinguishes between SLPs and ILPs by proposing that stage-level predicates have an extra argument position for events or spatiotemporal locations (she calls it a Davidsonian argument, referring to Davidson’s event semantics) which individual-level predicates lack. Kratzer’s analysis mainly applies to adjectives. Thus the difference between *det er et rom ledig* and *det er et rom grønt* lies in the fact that *ledig* can be modified by a locative PP, while the individual-level predicate *grønt* cannot. This is seen in other circumstances as well:

Rommet er ledig ut uka/hele dagen
 ‘The room is available till the end of the week/ the entire day’
 *rommet er grønt ut uka/hele dagen
 ‘the room is green till the end of the week/ the entire day’

Most verbs often denotes processes or activities, not permanent properties, therefore they may generally be modified either a locative or a temporal PP. Therefore, Kratzer’s event argument may not be very helpful when it comes to verbs.

³³ One criteria for distinguishing between SLPs and ILPs is to see whether the predicate can be used as complement to perceptive verbs:

Vi så ham spise pølser/ *kunne gresk
 Vi så ham full/ *intelligent

Although the sentence in (b) is rather marginal, it is nevertheless acceptable³⁴. As for example (a), it should not come as a surprise that the individual-level predicate cannot be used to predicate about an NP in an existential sentence, as this NP cannot be interpreted as a strong NP. (Indefinite NPs in PC are incompatible with the generic interpretation; hence the individual level predicates are unacceptable in this construction). Likewise, indefinite NPs, being inherently weak, cannot occur with individual-level predicates:

- (96) *En kvinne er intelligent
a woman is intelligent

There is simply no individual available for predication. The sentence would become acceptable only when the NP was interpreted generically, and hence having an identifiable referent (the whole class of women)³⁵.

If, on the other hand, the predicate is a stage-level predicate, an indefinite NP is perfectly acceptable:

- (97) En kvinne er syk
a woman is ill

Example (97) is acceptable because the illness is not considered to be a permanent property of the woman (as opposed to ‘intelligence’ in (96)). Stage-level predicate *syk* tolerates an existence reading of its subject. Ladusaw (1994) summarizes:” **Milsark’s generalization:** Properties may only be predicated of strong NPs. (=Individual level predicates must have strong subjects)” From a pragmatic point of view, this means that ILPs can only be used with identifiable and activated referents, i.e. topics. This again implies that ILPs can only occur in categorical sentences. The implications only goes one way, stage-level predicates can occur with both topics, and non-topics. For example, when discussing the

³⁴ These sentences with object predicates can also be found in Norwegian, as in *Det er så mange folk syke på dette hotellet* ‘there are so many people sick in this hotel’ or *det er et rom ledig i andre etasje* ‘there’s a room available in second floor’. No individual-level predicates may occur in these constructions in Norwegian either:

*Det er et rom grønt i andre etasje
There’s a room green in second floor

Notice that a preposing of the adjective is perfectly acceptable *det er et grønt rom i andre etasje*. But in that case it does not form a second predicate. With the adjective *ledig*, both structures are acceptable:

Det er et ledig rom her
There is an available room here
Det er et rom ledig her
There is a room available here

³⁵ Or if the NP was made more specific, as illustrated by these modified versions:

- a. En kvinne jeg kjenner er meget intelligent (specific)
a woman I know is very intelligent
b. En kvinne er typisk intelligent (generic)
a woman is typically intelligent

example *firemen are available* above, I mentioned that ‘available’ seemed to be one of the *properties* of ‘firemen’ when the NP was interpreted generically. Contrastively, the firemen seemed to be pointed out as the ones being available when the firemen were interpreted existentially. We are now able to identify the predicate as a stage-level predicate that may have an existential or generic reading: an existential reading if the judgement isthetic and generic reading if the judgement is categorical³⁶.

Milsark (ibid: 212) admits that it is difficult to find some independent criteria for telling the difference between stage-level and individual-level predicates. Among the usual criteria is if the property denoted is a permanent or a non-permanent property, and if the predicate that can be used as complement to perceptive verbs (Carlson 1977). Though according to these criteria there are not many verbs to be described as ILPs. As Diesing (1992: 42) points out, not all predicates can be easily categorized in terms of permanent versus temporary states. Therefore, one has to consider other properties that distinguish between stage-level and individual-level predicates, such as the eventuality aspect (cf. footnote 30) and the semantic interpretation of the NPs involved. The eventuality aspect accounts for the fact that SLPs can be modified by locative PPs, and the semantic interpretation has to do with the contrast between strong and weak determiners. That is, if the predicate requires a strong reading of its argument, then the predicate is an ILP. I believe that the crucial point is that the verb denotes a description which does not require a topic argument (Ladusaw (1994)). This criterion is captured by Milsark’s generalization as defined above.

Since the distinction between SLPs and ILPs is usually applied to adjectives, there might be some problems in trying to extend the use of this distinction to also include verbs. When talking about adjectives, the majority of the predicates are ILPs, while with verbs, the majority seem to be SLPs. In other words, most verbs describe activities or processes which are typical stage-level properties. However, if we follow Milsark’s generalization (individual level predicates must have strong subjects), it might be possible to make a distinction between verbs that typically favour strong NPs and those that do not.

To start with, we shall look at some of the verbs which were characterized as marginal or unacceptable in section 2.3, repeated here as (98):

36 Building upon Kratzer’s definition, Diesing (1992) proposes that subjects of stage-level predicates and subjects of individual predicates may be in different positions at the relevant level of representation. Subjects of stage-level predicates, being typically weak, are inside VP, while subjects of individual-level predicates are outside, in Spec IP. This is basically the same as was mentioned in section 4.xx, namely that presupposed arguments (strong NPs) must move out of VP.

- (98) ??Det sikler/tisser/spytter/strikker/fryser/spiser³⁷/tenker/angre/flire/klage/filosoferer/mediterer ei jente i stua³⁸

The fact that these are marginal presumably has something to do with their meanings being incompatible with the meaning of the PC. What we know about the meaning of the PC is that there is no predication over an argument; the argument has an existential reading and is therefore necessarily weak; and the construction often requires a locative PP. To begin with the locative PP, it is true that some of the verbs above are not typically location-oriented. For example, the verbs *angre* ‘regret’ and *tenke* ‘think’ do not easily fit with a PP, irrespective of which construction is used.

- (99) *De angret i ørkenen³⁹

They regretted in desert-the

- (100) ??jeg tenkte [på universitetet]⁴⁰ loc

I thought at university-the

However, some of the verbs cited in (98) may also take a locative PP, but not in a PC:

- (101) Han spyttet/tisset/siklet på plenen

he spat/peed on lawn-the

- (102) *det spytter en mann på bakken

there spits a man on ground-the

Bresnan explains the barring of a verb like *spytte* ‘spit’ in a locative inversion by the fact that the verb does not predicate location of its subject: “if a few sailors spit on the ground, the sailors are not necessarily on the ground” (Bresnan 1994: 82). I believe that Bresnan’s explanation also accounts for the ungrammaticality of (102).

Finally, there are some verbs which may predicate location of their subjects in a topic-comment sentence, but which are nevertheless not allowed in PCs.

³⁷ the fact that *strikke* and *spise* also takes direct objects makes the verb less acceptable in the PC.

³⁸ As I mentioned in 2.3, this list is not meant to be exhaustive. There are probably more verbs which could be added and some people may disagree with the question marks or stars. The acceptabilities are graded: some verbs are totally unacceptable while others can be made more or less acceptable by arranging the context. I have been interested in verbs which are marginal and verbs which I have not found any authentic examples of.

³⁹ I have searched the web for examples with *angre* in connection with a locative and I found only one occurrence: *Boot Boys lederne angret i fengsel*. the sentence is acceptable because *regretting* is something which often takes place in prisons. However, a mental processes as *regretting* is not generally depended on location. If somebody says *i regret*, a natural question would not be *where?* Whereas if somebody said that they were working, *where* would be an ordinary question to ask. The point here is that some verbs are not typically localizable, or the location is rather irrelevant.

⁴⁰ the easiest interpretation of this sentence is if *the university* is used to refer to a time in one’s life when one did a lot of thinking, as in *at the time i was studying at the university, i was doing a lot of thinking*.

- (103) a. Hans strikker i stua⁴¹
 Hans knits in living room-the
 b. *Det strikker en mann i stua
 there knits a man in living room-the

- (104) a. Jenta mediterer på kjøkkenet
 girl-the meditates at kitchen-the
 b. *Det mediterer ei jente på kjøkkenet
 there meditates a girl at kitchen-the

What separate these verbs from the ones in (105), which are acceptable?

- (105) a. Barna løper/leker ute på plenen
 children-the runs/plays out on lawn-the
 b. Det løper/leker barn ute på plenen
 there runs/plays children out on lawn-the

Lødrup (1999: 207) remarks that in a presentational focus construction (PC), the situation has to exist as a “perceptible fact, independently of being caused”. In a similar vein, Sveen (1996: 86-88) states that the essential requirement for verbs in a PC is that they denote perceptible events or activities. Verbs denoting mental activities are therefore infelicitous in the construction. He refers to these examples:

- (106) ?*det filosoferte ei jente over livets problemer
 There philosophized a girl over life-the’s problems

- (107) ?*det mediterer mange ungdommer
 There meditates many youths

In a situation where these sentences are made perceptible, the verb is possible in the PC. Thus if one imagines a situation where the meditation is perceptible as “sit in a certain position with eyes closed while concentrating one’s thoughts” (Sveen *ibid*: 87), the verb is more acceptable in a PC. In addition, as Sveen notes, the possibility of embedding a bare infinitive under a perceptual verb is a good test to see whether a verb can occur in the PC, as in (108):

- (108) ??jeg hørte ei jente filosofere over livets problemer
 I heard a girl philosophize over life-the’s problems

⁴¹ there is something odd about *knitting* being located to a place, as the verb generally would be used together with the object og the *knitting*, i.e. what is the result of the process is. Therefore, a natural way to use this verbs would be as in *i am knitting a scarf* and not *i am knitting in the armchair*.

Sveen's claim about perceptability is no doubt important in the analysis of verbs that are/are not allowed in Norwegian PCs, cf. 4.2.1.3. However, there may be an additional explanation for why the verbs in (98) look very strange in the PC. This explanation is based on the difference between strong and weak NPs and the concept of topicality, and it can account for all the verbs in (98), with the possible exception of *tisse* 'pee' and *spytt* 'spit'. From the examples above, we have the following classifications:

perceptive verbs: *strikke, spise, flire, tisse, spytt, sikle*

verbs with inherent "directed objects": *tisse, spytt, sikle*

others: *tenke, angre, klage, fryse, filosofere, mediter*

Consider the following sentences with and without topics. The indefinite NPs are not to be interpreted contrastively (*ei jente* 'a girl' should not be interpreted as *one* girl as opposed to *two* or a *girl* in contrast to a *boy*):

- (109) a. [Jeg]*topic* fryser
I am cold
b. ??[Ei jente fryser]*focus* ⁴²
a girl is cold
c. *Det fryser ei jente på kjøkkenet
there is cold a girl in kitchen-the
d. Gutten angret vs. *En gutt angret
boy-the regrets vs. a boy regrets
e. *Det angret en gutt der ute
there regrets a boy out there
f. ?en elg tisser ved tjernet
a moose pees by the pond
g. ?det tisser en elg ved tjernet

⁴² Diesing (1992: 43) suggests that the progressive aspect in English may be an indicator of stage-level Infl. Some predicates denoting psychological states, which are typically ILPs (Diesing *ibid.*), become stage-level predicates when they are in the progressive aspect (noted by Stump (1985)):

a. Basenjjs are being nervous

In addition Carlson (1977) notes that progressive aspect often yields an existential reading of bare plural subjects (Diesing *ibid.*: 44):

b. Basenjjs yodel (ambiguous between generic and existential reading)

c. Basenjjs are yodelling (existential reading)

Notice that the verbs which are infelicitous in the Norwegian PC cannot have progressive aspect in English:

a. *Basenjjs are being cold (with existential reading)

b. *Basenjjs are thinking (with existential reading)

It may be interesting to find out if there is a correlation between one-place verbs taking progressive aspect and verbs generally allowed inthetic sentences, and thus also those allowed in Norwegian PCs.

- there pees a moose by the pond
- h. *ei dame strikker/spiser der inne
an old woman knits/eats there in
- i. *det strikker/spiser ei dame der inne
there knits/eats an old woman there in

As we see, Sveen's perceptibility explanation fits with the examples: While the unperceptible verb in (d) and (e) makes the sentence infelicitous, the perceptible verb in (f) and (g) merely makes the sentence seem very strange. All the same, Sveen's explanation cannot account for the strangeness of (f) and (g), and is therefore insufficient. The merit of an explanation that bases itself on weak/strong NPs and topicality is that it makes sense of this strangeness.

For example, a verb like *fryse* is more likely to describe a property or state of someone (requiring a strong NP) than serving as a description of someone or something (which may have a weak NP). The verb cannot be independent of the person or the experiencer of the condition of being cold, as in **there is freezing going on*. Thus, the 'condition of being cold' requires an identified referent to which the state can be attached. The NP has to be informationally autonomous from the verb so that the verb can predicate over it. As the NP in the PC is necessarily weak, a verb like *fryse* is unable to occur in the PC. The reason why I choose to call verbs such as *fryse* individual level predicates is due to a derivation of Milsark's generalization made by Ladusaw (1994: 4). The derivation is as follows: "ILPs must be predicates in Categorical Judgements". As categorical judgements only can have presupposed (as in Diesing's 1992 restrictive clause) topic NPs, the subject of an ILP must have a strong NP.

What is important to have in mind when talking about the distinction between SLPs and ILPs is that they behave differently when it comes to the formation of information units. ILPs are characterized by having strong NPs which form independent information units independently of the verb. This means that the predicate does not, or cannot, form an information unit with its argument (cf. 4.1.1). SLPs, on the other hand, may be part of a focus which extends over both the argument and the predicate, as in *en mann faller i vannet* 'a man is falling into the water'. In this case, the sentence is probably uttered as all-new information, as an appeal to do something to help the man. Conversely, the sentence *ei dame strikker der inne* 'a woman is knitting in there', is not likely to be uttered as all-new information. One reason seems to be that the information in this sentence is quite dense, the verb being very

informative by itself, something which is also reflected in the accentuation pattern of the sentence. Notice the difference between the two sentences with the verb *strikke* and *falle*:

- (110) a. ei **dame strikker** der inne
b. en **mann** faller i **vannet**

While both the argument and the predicate must be accented in (a), it seems that the argument and the predicate is fighting for attention (cf. 4.1.1 and 4.1.2). The verb is more likely to form an information unit with its argument when it is deaccented, as in *en prest arbeider der ute* ‘a priest is working out there’, *en kanin hopper rundt i hagen* ‘a rabbit is jumping around in the garden’ etc⁴³.

Another property of the verbs which are strange in a Norwegian PC is that they force a generic reading of bare plurals. Consider sentences (111) and (112):

- (111) a. Brannmenn arbeider der ute (existential interpretation)
firemen are working there out
'firemen are working out there'
b. Brannmenn kommer (existential interpretation)
firemen are coming
- (112) a. Brannmenn tenker/filosoferer (generic interpretation)
firemen are thinking/philosophizing
b. Brannmenn sikler/spytter (generic interpretation)
firemen are drivelling/spitting

The two first examples above contain verbs which are perfectly acceptable in the PC, and the bare plurals may gain an existential interpretation ((a) and (b) may also have a generic interpretation but this is less likely to be the case in (b). The point is that both may have an existential interpretation). In the next two examples, on the other hand, the verbs force a generic interpretation of the NPs, thus a strong, topic interpretation. As we saw above, the difference is often reflected in intonation:

- (113) **Brannmenn** kom
Brannmenn **sikler**

The (a) example expresses athetic judgement, while the (b) example expresses a categorical judgement. The difference in intonation is a result of a difference in focus; (a)

⁴³ If the verb is accented as in *en prest arbeider der*, it is often interpreted contrastively, as opposed to *en prest sover der ute* ‘a priest is sleeping out there’. The contrastive reading is also possible in the PC: *det jobber faktisk noen her* ‘someone is actually working in here’ (lit. there is working actually someone here), cf. section 4.2.1.1.

focuses upon 'firemen' (Lambrecht's (1996) sentence-focus structure) while (b) focuses upon the verb (Lambrecht's predicate-focus structure). We can use the in table 4 in 4.1.1 to mark the distinction between the two examples above.

Table 6

<i>contrastive</i>	<i>unmarked</i>
Brannmenn kommer	Brannmenn kommer
Brannmenn sikler	Brannmenn sikler

While the unmarked reading of *brannmenn kom* is existential, the unmarked reading of *brannmenn sikler* is generic. A change in intonation yields a contrastive reading of *komme* in the first sentence and *brannmenn* in the latter. As the verb *komme* has an existential reading of its argument it fits with the weak NP in the PC. The perceptibility explanation cannot account for these differences between these two verbs.

The reason I use both the weak/strong distinction and the notion of topicality when trying to account for the differences between the SLPs and ILPs is thatthetic sentences in general also allow some strong NPs, as in *John called*. So in order to separate between *John called* and *John called*, I also need the topic/non-topic distinction. For example, in the two sentences below, the first expresses a categorical mode of judgement and an ILP, while the latter expresses athetic judgement and contains an SLP. However, both NPs are semantically strong as defined in 4.1.2. The (a) example is supposed to have the same intonation as the (b) example:

- (114) a. **Mary** is laughing
 b. **Mary** is coming

The difference between the two is the same as I noted above when discussing the bare plurals: the (a) example only has a contrastive reading of its NP while the sentence in (b) does not. That is, it may have a contrastive reading, but usually it would only assert the fact that Mary is coming. Thus a verb like *laugh* is difficult in athetic sentence because it necessarily yields a contrastive reading of its argument when the argument receives focus. It may be that the status of arguments being topic or not is the decisive factor when trying to separate between the verb types, as is the case for the example above (114). However, as PCs only allow weak NPs, for now I find it useful to distinguish between weak and strong NPs as well. The two properties that distinguish the SLPs from the ILPs are shown below:

Properties of SLPs and ILPs

	Stage	Individual
Topic NP	no/yes	yes
Strong NP	no/yes	yes

Saying that ILPs require a strong NP accounts for Milsark's generalization. Saying that the stage-level predicates can have both topic/non-topic NPs and weak and strong NPs refers to the fact that the verbs can be found in boththetic and categorical judgements as in *John called* and *John called*. There may be a third group of verbs that strongly favour weak, non-topic NPs (thus stage-level), as verbs of existence and appearance, which are the core verbs of the PC, e.g. *there exists some problems* vs. *some problems exists*. Even if the latter sentence were uttered with accent on the NP, the sentence would still be odd. Here the NP must be placed postverbally (i.e. inside the 'existential closure' according to Diesing 1992)⁴⁴. I will not go further into this here.

Returning to Milsark, we see that what started out as a distinction between adjective predicates allowed in the ES and those not allowed in the ES, has now turned into a distinction between verbs that require strong NPs and those that do not⁴⁵. Since the verbs which were marginal or unacceptable in the PC required a strong NP, I chose to call them SLPs. I am aware that this is not standard practice when dividing between SLPs and ILPs, since what is regarded as the decisive factor is the non-permanent/permanent division. However, as this division is not very suitable for verbs, I have, along with Ladusaw (1994: 4) focused upon the fact that ILPs necessarily take strong NPs. The analysis brought forward in this section has only been concerned intransitive verbs and has not taken into account modifying elements such as adjuncts. It is possible that different kinds of adverbs, adjectives or PPs may change a verb's status as either SLP or ILP.

I have tried to sketch out the correlations between mode of judgement, verb type and type of NP below:

⁴⁴ These insights can be put in a more general typological frame. In some cases the lack of pragmatic accessibility of the subject/topic element can lead to unacceptable sentences. (See Aissen 1999 and 2000 and the references therein): some languages do not allow indefinite NPs to occur in topic/subject position, and some does not tolerate definite NPs in object position.

⁴⁵ The implication does only go one way, as it does not mean that stage-level predicates cannot take strong NPs.

is, affirming the existence of an eventuality) or complex judgements (A is B, traditional topic-comment) derives from the pragmatic notion of presuppositionality. It was shown that PCs are typicalthetic sentences because of the sentence-focus reading and the non-active status of the participants in the sentence. The non-active or topic status of the NP referent in subject position was marked by accenting the NP. Based on the fact that the verb and the NP in a PC (as inthetic sentences in general) do not form a predication relation, I concluded that it was better to describe PVNPs in PCs as themes irrespective of verb type, not only to describe the deagentivization effect in these sentences, but mainly to separate them from arguments in categorical judgements.

In the second section, 4.1.2, I presented Milsark's (1974) distinction between weak and strong determiners and Diesing's (1992) structural version of the distinction. Milsark suggests that there is a restriction against quantificational NPs in existential sentences and that this quantification has to do with the NP already being partly activated. Diesing proposes that NPs in PCs are inside VP and hence bound by an 'existential closure'. This distinction was also shown to lie in the contrast of presuppositionality. Presupposed NPs must move out of the VP domain. Strong NPs, being necessarily presupposed to exist, were related to categorical judgements. Further, in section 4.1.3, I argued that the PC involves an existential reading which is not found in otherthetic sentences, such as the locative inversion. The idea of having presentational focus as the only, main motivation for both sentences seems to miss this one important distinction.

Finally, I presented Milsark's (1979) division between stage-level and individual-level predicate and showed that an extended version of this division could explain the difference between verbs allowed or not allowed in the PC andthetic sentences in general. The verbs which are not allowed are verbs which seem to require strong NPs. Based on this I suggested that the PC may have another function that that implied by the presentational focus. Asthetic sentences in general is used to present NPs *and* report about events (cf. Brentano in section 4.1.1), it is likely that PCs also have this second function, as it seems to share the same type of verbs with otherthetic sentences.

We are now in a position to reconsider the characteristics of the properties of the PC which was more or less indirectly accounted for by the presentational focus, but which now is said to result from thetheticity and the 'existential closure' of the PC:

- Relative newness: the NP is weak, i.e. non-topical, and have an ‘existential reading’
- Argument in object position: the NP is VP-internal, weak NP
- Deagentivization: there is no predication relation between the predicate and the argument and therefore the argument is characterized as a theme.
- Verb restriction: the PC is restricted to stage-level

Many of the properties related tothetic judgments have been explained with reference to the notion of presentational focus. Yet, whereas theticity is a characteristic of all sentences lacking a pragmatic topic, the presentational focus only accounts for sentences with postverbal arguments, thus only accounting for the sentences which are structurally marked as non-topical. As focus often is seen as the opposite of topicality, these facts have led to an understanding of the PVNP as being the presented focus of the sentence. But does the non-topicality of the NP referent necessarily imply that it should be described as the focus of the sentence? This is the question I will be concerned with in the remainder of this chapter.

4.2 Focus assignment in Norwegian and French PCs

As we have seen in the discussion above, the presentational construction is characterized by being athetic judgement consisting of a stage-level predicate and a theme argument. What makes it distinct from otherthetic expressions and constructions is that it enforces a non-specific “category” reading of the PVNP. I have concluded that the concept oftheticity can explain some of the properties of the Norwegian PC which has been said to be driven by presentational focus. However, sincetheticity only accounts for the non-topicality of the NP referent, I said that this was no indication that the argument should be treated as a focus.

In addition, the analyses based on presentational focus had problems explaining how some verbs but not others have the possibility of ‘<theme loc> overlay’ or ‘locative incorporation’ (cf. 3.1.3, 3.1.4 and 4.x). Besides, the PFocus cannot explain the semantic difference between the different readings of the PVNPs in PCs and LIs. In the next two sections we shall see that there is a difference between PCs as well – regarding focus assignment – and that this difference has created problems for the cross-linguistic analysis of these constructions.

My conclusion is that *there are two types of PCs: those which present entities and those which report events*. Therefore, while part one accounted for some semantic characteristics of the PC based on the pragmatic notion of topicality (and presuppositionality), and thereby related it to and separated it from otherthetic sentences, part two will deal with the communicative function of the construction, i.e. what we use them for. By comparing Norwegian and French PCs, I show that the main difference between the constructions in the two languages lies in its communicative function.

4.2.1 From presentation of entities to presentation of events

The purpose of this section is to present some PCs which can clearly be said to deviate from the presentational construction proper, as defined by Bresnan (1994), Lambrecht (1994), and Hetzron (1971), among others. In order to do so, I will have to examine the information structuring in various presentational constructions. I ask the following questions: What is ‘new’ in the sentence? What is the most informative part? How is it possible to decide what part is the most informative?

The fact that neither the predicate nor the argument in the PC constitute ‘given’ information has led researchers to propose that these sentences do not have focus partitioning, but that the entire sentence is in focus: “Since the assertion extends over the entire proposition, assertion and focus coincide in these structures”(Lambrecht 1995:233, see also Choi 2001). This was described as a characteristic trait ofthetic sentences in part one of this thesis. In my opinion, it is nevertheless possible to extract what is regarded as the most informative elements in the PC by comparing the semantic content of the different parts, their possible contexts and the intonation they are given, i.e. how much intonational attention (in the form of accentuation) the elements get. First, however, I will present some general understandings of the function of PCs. This will form the basis for the discussion of the function of the PCs in Norwegian and French.

Many pragmatic accounts based on English material have maintained that the function of the PC is presentational in the sense that it introduces or presents an NP referent. Accordingly, existential sentences like *there are lions in Africa* are often considered to be the core examples of the PC. The basic discourse function of the PC is defined by Hetzron (1971:86) as that of “[calling] special attention to one element of the sentence [...] for recall in the subsequent discourse or situation.” The referent is thus a potential topic. Bolinger argues that PCs (there-insertion in his terminology) “presents something to our minds (brings

a piece of knowledge into consciousness)” (1977: 94). Bresnan & Kanerva (1989) draw on the insights of Hetzron and Bolinger and state that locative inversion in English has a presentative function, which is to say that it serves to present relatively new information into the discourse.

An example of a proto-typical use of the presentational construction is given below:

(115) Da jenta kom ut, så sto det en bjørn på tråkka. ”God kveld,” hilste bjørnen.

(home.no.net/csnorth/eventyr)

When girl-the came out, then stood there a bear on patio-the.”good evening”, greeted bear-the.

The referent is ‘presented’ in the form of an indefinite NP, and thereby made pragmatically available for topic coding in the subsequent sentence. Often the grammatical relation between the PC and the subsequent clause in which the introduced NP referent appears as a topic, is one of syntactic dependency. This is illustrated by the fairytale beginning in (161), where the topic occurs in a subordinated clause.

(116) Det var en gang en mann som hadde tre sønner

There was one time a man that had three sons

The second clause appears in form of a relative clause and the antecedent is the presented NP *en mann*.

As for the accentuation in the PC, Lambrecht (1995:178) writes, presumably based on English, German and French, that “Because of the discourse function of presentational clauses, which is to promote brand-new or unused referents to active status, the expressions used to code the “presented” referents are indefinite or definite ACCENTED LEXICAL NOUN PHRASES.” He also argues that “a SF construction [sentence-focus constructions, which include PCs] is minimally characterized by the presence of a pitch accent on the subject and by the absence of prosodic prominence on the predicate portion of the sentence.” (2000: 617). Since accentuation often reflects the focus of the sentence (cf. 3.2.1), and since presentational sentences tend to have the main accent on the argument, the result is of course that the most informative element in the PC is in fact the argument. However, as I will show in the next section, this is not always the case; in fact, very often the accent falls on the predicate in Norwegian PCs.

Having discussed the characteristics of the proto-typical PC as it appears in English, and apparently in French and German we can now move on to the Norwegian cases which do not fit this description.

4.2.1.1 Phonological and semantic ‘weight’

As I mentioned earlier, it is often claimed that the PC, being all-new, is detached from the discourse context. Therefore, it might be difficult to divide the PC into given and new information based on some of the criteria in 3.2.1. However, if we take intonation and semantic content as our points of departure, we may say something about what is most informative in the sentence and hence what the sentence is used for. We already know that if an element bears accent, then it normally represents focus; if it is not accented, it is typically part of the background (cf. 3.2.1).

The notion of ‘informational weight’ (a term introduced by Hartvigson and Jakobsen (1974))⁴⁶ can account for both syntactic and semantic informativeness of an element. For example, relatively heavy NPs such as *ei utenlandsk dame* ‘a foreign woman’ are more likely to be the informative part of the sentence than the unaccented *noen* ‘somebody’, by being syntactically more complex and semantically more informative in terms of detailed description. Furthermore, if *ei utenlandsk dame* is semantically more informative relative to the verb, as in (117), the NP referent would most probably be the ‘newest’ information in the sentence⁴⁷.

(117) Det kom ei **utenlandsk dame**

There arrived a foreign woman

This means that the fact that someone was to come could be activated by both the hearer and the speaker (the sentence in (117) could well be the answer to the question *did anyone come?* or *who came?*). The reverse is very unlikely, i.e. that the foreign woman is under discussion, and the fact that she arrived is new. This has to do with the non-topicality of the NP which was discussed in section 4.1.1. There is a third alternative, in which the entire proposition is presupposed. In this case, the verb is accented to affirm the fact that a foreign woman did indeed come. This alternative is, however, not relevant for my purpose, since it really does not say much about the information structuring, the entire sentence being presupposed.

⁴⁶ In Hartvigson and Jakobsen (1974), ‘weight’ refers to either syntactic complexity or informational content. They argue that the felicity of locative inversion is determined by the relative weight of the subject and the verb. The explanation is that heavy NPs tend to occur last.

⁴⁷ The fact that the semantic weight is relative is also shown by the examples below (Ladd 1996:180):

They’ve **discovered** something

They’ve discovered the **drugs**

Ladd (ibid: 181), citing Bolinger writes: “the semantic emptiness of certain nouns can be illustrated by comparing them with other nouns that are semantically richer”.

Assuming that the intonation pattern reflects the information structure of an utterance, we could say that the verb *komme* ‘come’ in sentences like (117) is seldom the focus of the sentence. The verb is quite uninformative by itself, and only serves to introduce and highlight arguments. In other words, it is a proto-typical presentational verb. Intrinsically light verbs are the most suitable for the presentational (NP-introducing) purpose, since what is sought to be highlighted is not the verb, but the NP. This of course explains why verbs of existence and appearance are the verbs most often found in presentational sentences.

Conversely, if the NP referent is less informative than the verb, as in (118) and (119), the ‘newest’ information lies in the entire proposition or the verb (and the locative):

(118) Det lekte noen der

There played some there

(119) Har du sett en katt?

Det satt en på trappa

Have you seen a cat?

There was sitting one at stairs-the

This means that in (118), neither the verb nor the NP is likely to have been activated (except of course in the third alternative, which I disregard). The sentence cannot be preceded by the question *was anyone playing there?* If the intended message is that ‘somebody played there’, as opposed to ‘everybody’, a PC would make a very unusual alternative (cf. 4.1.2.1). In (119), the NP referent is in fact supposed to refer to the same referent referred to in the question. Consequently, the NP referent cannot be the newest information in the sentence. The new information is that a cat was seen to be sitting on the stairs. The most informative part is thus the location.

Generally, words which seem to provide little information are vague or general content words, such as *ting* ‘thing’, *person* ‘person’, *folk* ‘people’ and the indefinite pronouns *noen* ‘someone’, *noe* ‘something’ etc. These are semantically less “contentful” than others, and so their accentability is reduced (Ladd 1996: 181-93). They seldom represent the focus of the sentence. For example, as Sæbø (2005: 19) remarks, some pairings of elements are more predictable than others. He gives the following example (from Drubig 1992):

(120) a. they’ve painted the **barn** red

b. #they’ve painted the **barn** black

It seems that because red is the normal colour of barns, ‘red’ is relatively predicted from the NP ‘barn’ and therefore can be deaccented since it is less “contentful” in this context. The colour black on the other hand, is highly unexpected and needs to be highlighted by accentuation.

In short, the semantic weight and the “pragmatic weight” often coincide; the inherently most informative constituent (from a semantic point of view) also is the constituent to receive the main attention.

As for there-insertion sentences in English, Birner (1992, in Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995: 229) notes that the discursive principle governing the verb distribution in these sentences is the requirement that the verb be ‘informationally light’. This means that the verb is relatively predictable from its linguistic and non-linguistic context, and consequently does not provide totally new information to the sentence (cf. Levin and Rappaport Hovav, 1995: 230-232, and Birner and Ward 1998: 191-192). Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995: 230) writes: “If a verb in the locative inversion construction did contribute information that was not predictable from context, it would detract from the newness of the information conveyed by the postverbal NP”. Consequently, as its own semantic content is somehow predicted it only serves to introduce or present NP referents. This is the case for the sentence in (121) below.

(121) -*hvor mange er det på arbeidsplassen din?*

how many are there on workplace yours

-*vi er ikke så altfor mange. Det jobber to i resepsjonen, og så jobber det to i kantina.*

we are not so too many. There works two in reseption-the, and then works there two in

As *arbeidsplass* ‘workplace’ is already mentioned in the question, thus *jobbe* ‘to work’ is already consciously activated for both the hearer and the speaker, and therefore ‘informationally light’. The main function of this sentence is to present the number of workers, and the way this is done is by using a verb which describes the activity related to the NPs and the place.

However, non-core verbs in Norwegian do not need to be contextually predictable, as the sentence in (122) shows. Here, the verb bears the main accent in the sentence, and the PVNP is totally accentless.

(122) Hysj! Det **jobber** faktisk noen her

shh there works actually someone here

The main purpose of (122) is to inform the hearer that someone is working, not who is working. Thus the main function is not to introduce or present a brand-new referent in the discourse to make it ready for recall in subsequent sentences, like Hetzron writes (cf. 4.2.1). In fact, changing the focus to the NP by placing the main accent on it in (122) would change the communicative purpose of the sentence and lead to a contrastive reading: The fact that somebody is working is opposed to the fact that nobody is working. In another context than the present one, where the purpose is not to hush someone to be quiet, this is of course a possibility, although a very unlikely one. The change of accent is not possible in (121). If the main accent was laid on the verb, the sentence would be infelicitous⁴⁸.

Another example, which clearly demonstrates the various uses of the construction, was uttered by a friend of mine during a conversation about tenants and landlords:

- (123) Det hadde jo **forsvunnet** ting
 there had yes disappeared things
 'Things did disappear'

The accent on the verb, and the resulting deaccenting of the NP argument, serve to emphasize the fact that things had disappeared, and not that the things that had disappeared were indeed things. If the sentence had been uttered with primary accent on the NP *ting*, it would clearly have conveyed contrastive focus, i.e. the fact that *things* had disappeared would be contrasted to the fact that other entities (for example humans or animals) had disappeared. This reading is pragmatically more marked than the non-contrastive reading, as there would be few situations in which the utterance would sound acceptable. Therefore, the most natural reading is to focus on the disappearing instead of the thing, by stressing the verb instead of the NP.

Notice also that when accented verbs are followed by semantically light NPs, as *non* and *ting*, the PC cannot contain a focus promoting adverb like *bare* 'only'. These adverbs are typically seen as yielding an improved PC as they increase the NP focusing effect, yet in (124) they are only made worse.

⁴⁸ In 4.1.4, I said that the SLPs could be deaccented, as is often the case in PCs: *det ligger et katt der borte* (lit. there is lying a cat there over). If it bears accent, it is interpreted contrastively. (ILPs on the other hand seem to require accent, and have no contrastive reading when accented cf. example (110) in section 4.1.4). However, when the argument together with a SLP is an accentless indefinite noun or pronoun, as *ting* or 'non', the verb requires accent but is not necessarily interpreted contrastively, as in *det hadde jo bare forsvunnet ting* (124 b). It thus seems that the accentless NPs behave different than other indefinite NPs, since other NPs require accent: **det hadde jo bare forsvunnet penger*.

- (124) a. *Det **jobber** faktisk bare noen her
 there works actually only someone here
 b. *Det hadde jo bare **forsvunnet** ting⁴⁹
 there had yes just disappeared things

As opposed to:

- (125) Det jobber bare **to stykker** der
 Det hadde bare forsvunnet **ting** vi ikke **likte**

It is however not central to my argument whether accent can fall on *ting*; what matters is that the PC can have two different functions, that of presenting an event and that of presenting an entity. Not all cases are as clear-cut as this though. Consider the two instances of the verb *sitte* ‘sit’ below (the sentences were found on the web so naturally they did not come accented. The marking of stress is to indicate how they would normally be pronounced (excluding default sentence final stress).

- (126) a. ... siden man aldri vet om det **sitter** noen der eller ikke. (www.tbane.no 24.08.05)
 since one never knows if there sits someone there or not
 b. som du ser, så **sitter** det noen her.
 as you see, so sits there someone here

- (127) ...hvorvidt det sitter en **kvinne** der
 whether there sits a woman there

Neither of the sentences in (126) and (127) are strictly presentational, in the sense that they serve to introduce *noen* as a referent into the discourse. Example (126 a) is likely to express a concern about whether someone *is* at a certain place, whereas (126 b) reports about a seat being occupied. However, in (127), the verb *sitte* is used to present the woman, and thus profiles the NP referent⁵⁰. The question is not whether someone *is* in a certain place, but whether that someone is a woman.

This distinction between the two sentences can be made clearer if we negate them. PVNP is more likely to be the scope of negation when it is a full lexical NP than when it

⁴⁹ This sentence is completely acceptable if ‘ting’ is not in the scope of ‘bare’.

⁵⁰ In this case, the verb *sitte* is somehow emptied of its content. This is not unusual for locational verbs like *sitte* ‘sit’, *stå* ‘stand’, *ligge* ‘lye’, which undergo the same changes in pseudocoordinations (cf. Section 3.2.3) and fixed expressions such as *sitte hjemme* ‘stay at home’, *stå sterkt* ‘be in a strong position’, *ligge etter* ‘be behind’. These expressions are nevertheless different from the ones in NP presenting PCs, since it is possible to ‘stå sterkt’ when one is physically lying. The point is nevertheless that these verbs are often emptied of some of their semantic content.

appears as a deaccented ‘*non*’. Therefore, *ikke* ‘not’ in (126) is a negation of the fact that somebody is sitting somewhere. A modification of the sentence in (126 a), by a change of NP (128), would direct the negation towards the NP. This reading is not possible in (129).

(128) ... om det sitter en kvinne der eller ikke.

if there sits a woman there or not

‘if there’s a woman sitting there or not (or nobody sitting there/or a man sitting there)’

presupp: sitting there is x

assertion: x=a woman

negation: x or not x

(129) ...om det sitter non der eller ikke

‘if there is someone sitting there or not (or nobody sitting there/*or everybody sitting there)

presupp: -

assertion: someone is sitting there

negation: someone is sitting there or not someone is sitting there

In the first sentence, the verb is ‘informationally light’, meaning that it is partly predicted, while in the latter, the verb is part of the new information. The difference between the two kinds of PCs presented here lies in the attention that is given either to the verbal process (which is essentially being or not being) or the NP referent. This clearly illustrates that the the NP in (129) cannot be the most informative element in the sentence on which the main attention is directed.

Many of the examples cited here include the indefinite pronoun *noen* ‘somebody’. Since it cannot normally bear accent and retain the same interpretation, the main accent falls on the verb⁵¹ (if the accent falls on the *noen* ‘somebody’, the pronoun will be interpreted contrastively. The same thing happened when accenting *ting* ‘things’ in (132)). These ‘indefinite pronouns’ also occur unaccented in other positions where full lexical NPs would be accented:

(130) De har **sett** non (cf. De har sett en **filmstjerne**)

they have seen someone (cf. they have seen a movie star)

The reason seems to be that ‘indefinite pronouns’ contribute little semantic weight or information (see Ladd 1996:180). Because of this, many PCs that contain indefinite *non* are

⁵¹ The distinction in writing between the specific and the non-specific *noen* is based on the pronunciation of the two. The specific *noen* normally occurs in subject position and are pronounced *noen*, while the non-specific *non*, never occurs sentence-initially.

not used to present entities, rather they report about the event in which the entities are obligatory participants, as in *det jobber non her* ‘someone’s working here’.

As will be shown, the event-reporting sentences with main accent on the verb are not found in French PCs. The verb *work* is only acceptable if it is informationally light, as in the example in (131). The sentence was found on a web site for a star wars game, and is part of a description of places and tasks executed at the relevant places.

- (131) Ceux en attente dans l’espace sont pris en charge par le poste de commandement. Il y travaille une dizaine de personne en journée et seulement 4 la nuit. (membres.lycos.fr)
'the ones waiting in the space are being handled by the command post.
There are some ten persons working there at daytime and only 4 at night.

Since the verb is contextually inferable from the preceding sentence, the verb does not convey the ‘newest’ information in the sentence. Likewise, in the sentence below (132) was found on a page about travelling with pets. The words *service vétérinaires* ‘veterinary service’ occurred immediately before the sentence, thus the working place of the veterinaries are activated in the consciousness of the reader.

- (132) Il y travaille des spécialistes hautement qualifiés, qui prendront très grand soin de votre animal préféré. (www.visitor.ru/fra 26.02.05)
there there works specialists highly qualified, who take very good care of your animal preferred

As a result, the verb is partly predicted and is thus informationally light. The fact that the sentence is followed up by a relative clause in which the specialists functions as topic, implies that the sentence is indeed an NP-presenting, presentational focus sentence.

However, if the intention is to convey information about someone working, i.e. that ‘work is going on’, the PC is not an appropriate alternative in French. The sentence in (133) is the equivalent of the Norwegian sentence in (122).

- (133) *il y **travaille** quelqu’un
There there works someone

Similarly, a more frequently used verb such as *disparaître* ‘disappear’, is just as reluctant to appear as focus:

(134) *Il **disparaît** des choses/quelqu'un⁵²
there disappears things/someone

As with *travailler*, all examples with *disparaître* gets accented lexical noun phrases, as illustrated in (135):

(135) Tous les jours, il disparaît des **êtres**, des **choses** et même des **bêtes** qui ont, dans la vie, une autre signification.
every day there disappears human beings, things and even animals who has in the life another signification.

Likewise, Kampers-Manhe (1998), observes that verbs in 'subjunctive inversions' (inversion construction with subjunctive mode of the verb⁵³) can never represent the only focus of the sentence. Either the subject and the verb together form a broad focus as in the first sentence in (b), or the subject is the only focus (2004:569).

(136) a. Je veux que vienne **Bernadette**/*je veux que **vienn**e Bernadette
b. Je veux que Bernadette **vienn**e/ je veux que **Bernadette** vienne
I want that Bernadette comes

Both examples are suitable answers to the questions *qu'as-tu?* 'What is the matter with you?' which signals that the sentence is all-new, i.e. a sentence focus in Lambrecht's (1994) terms, and *qui veux-tu qui vienne?* 'Who do you want to come?' which indicate that the sentence is used to identify a certain referent, i.e. an argument focus. However, example (a) is not a suitable answer to the question *que veux-tu que Bernadette fasse?* 'What do you want that Bernadette does?'. (This can be explained by the fact that the 'subjunctive inversion' is, as the PC, an expression of theticity, and therefore the inversion is inappropriate in a context where the argument is activated. If Bernadette is deaccented, this means that she is necessarily activated.)

Thus the PVNP in french PCs is either part of a broad focus including the predicate or the NP is the only focus of the sentence. The predicate cannot be the only focus in the sentence. This is similar to what has been observed in so-called 'stylistic inversions' in French ('stylistic inversion' is a collective term for different types of NP inversions). Kampers-Manhe (1998) proposes that there is a constraint on the subject (PVNP) in 'subjunctive

⁵² This sentence is acceptable if the accent is placed on the NP: *Il disparaît des choses*. But in that case the meaning is changed, see comment to example (132) above.

⁵³ Kampers-Manhe (1998) considers this type of inversion as an unaccusative construction.

inversion' saying that the subject should be focus in the sentence. This was illustrated in (136 a) above.

The French PCs can also involve descriptions in which the PVNP cannot be seen as a potential topic. The point is that the PVNP always is rather informative, as seen by the following examples.

(137) a. Il chante, au loin du bois, un carillon d'été (Hériaux 1980:224)

There sings, far in the wood, a summer carillon

b. Il vint de la terre un parfum, si bon et si suave... (Hanisch 2004:51)

There came from the earth a perfume, so good and so delicious

c. Il y courait une rivière d'eau potable (google 15.03.05)

There there ran a river with water potable

If the PVNP is less informative however, the sentences are less acceptable:

(138) a. *Il chante, au loin du bois, quelque chose

There sings, far in the wood, something

b. *Il vint de la terre quelque chose

There came from the earth something

c. *Il y courait quelque chose/quelqu'un

it there ran something

In fact, when searching on google for the combination "il vient quelque chose", only 44 occurrences were found, and the relevant examples counted less than 10, compared to norwegian which had 15 700 occurrences. Notice however that the combination *il vient quelqu'un* is far more common, and that *il lui/leur/me est arrivé quelque chose* is very common, so it may depend on verb type, and the placement of the PP. In most of the Norwegian examples, the pronoun *noe* 'something' serves as a determiner, as in *det kommer noe mer konkret* 'there comes something more concrete'. Despite of this, the difference between French and Norwegian is quite remarkable. What does this difference mean?

A possible explanation for why some of the PCs in Norwegian are infelicitous in French lies in the accentuation pattern in French. While Norwegian and English may stress different part of the sentence at their discretion, in French the accent generally seems to fall on the last constituent (the default accent)⁵⁴. As Jones (1996:33) and Lambrecht (1995:22)

⁵⁴ Even though the clause-final position is the unmarked position for the (focus) accent in English, French and Norwegian, French is undoubtedly the language that follow this constraint most rigorously. As Ladd (1996:179 f.8) notes: "Catalan and French seem to be the most strongly resistant to moving accent out of phrase-final or sentence-final position".

remarks, it is more usual to reorganize the sentence so to make the focus occur in final position than to use intonation.

Two observations seem to confirm this supposition. First, in many French PCs, the object occurs after the PP. Second, often the PC is more acceptable when the PP is clitized and placed before the verb. I will present the two observations in turn.

Many of the examples found in Hanisch (2004) and Hériau (1980) have the structure [*expl* V PP NP].

- (139) a. Il ne venait de sa gorge que quelques gargouillements... (Hanisch 2004: 50)⁵⁵
 there not came from his throat only some gurgling noises
- b. ...comme s'il lui venait à l'esprit quelque chose qu'elle... (ibid: 49)
 as if there her came to the thought something that she...
 'as if she had thought of something she...'
- c. il éclata, au début de l'été, cette année-là, une épidémie meurtrière. (Hériau 1980: 227)
 there broke out, in beginning of the summer, that year, an epidemic mortal
- d. il scintille atour de leur front les étoiles de pourpre et d'or (Hériau 1980: 238)
 there shimmered around their foreheads? the stars of purple and of gold

That this structure seems to be rather common in French PCs may be an indicator of their function. That is, as French when the NP is placed sentence-finally it gets the main accent which may serve to highlight the NP.

Secondly, French has a preference for clitized locative PPs in the PC. French, unlike Norwegian, has the possibility of so-called adverbial clitics that can replace an entire PP. As a simplification, we can say that the clitic *y* substitute PPs introduced by *à*, as illustrated by the examples below:

- (140) a. Je pense à Marie/ J'y pense⁵⁶
 I think of Mary/I think of her
- b. Jean part à Lyon demain/ Jean y part demain
 Jean travels to Lyon tomorrow/ Jean travels there tomorrow

In cases like (1) *y* replaces an indirect object expressed by a PP, whereas the clitic in (2) denotes a locative PP. Jones (1996:261) remarks that when *y* replaces a PP with no

55 A native speaker told me that the NP in this sentence can in fact occur before the PP: Il ne venait que quelques gargouillements de sa gorge. However, in that case, the meaning of the sentence is slightly changed. From meaning 'only gurgling noises came out of his mouth', the sentence now has a partly presupposed PP and so we know that something came out of his mouth, what we didn't know, was that it was only gurgling noises.

⁵⁶ *J'y pense* is highly stylistic when it is used on persons. Normally one would say *je pense à elle* 'I think of her'. I was made aware of this fact by Hans Petter Helland.

specified grammatical function, the particular spatial relation is not particularly important. In addition, the clitic has to represent given information.

- (141) a. il y travaille des spécialistes hautement qualifiés (www.visitor.ru/fra 26.02.05)
 it there works specialists highly qualified
- b. il y circule des journaux d'occasion (www.perso.wanadoo.fr 22.03.05)
 it there circulates journals of
- c. il y nage beaucoup d'insectes (Hériaux 1980: 232)
 it there swim many of insects
- d. car il y rôdait de dangereuses créatures
 because it there wandered dangerous creatures
- e. Il y courait un élan, une vivacité, des formules qui ont franchi les siècles. (www.ceco-fipf.org 22.03.05)
 it there ran an eagerness, a

We see that by cliticizing the PP, the PVNP is in the sentence-final position, which is the natural accent (boundary) position in French. As a result, the PVNP gets main attention. Lambrecht (1995) relates the preference for the place adverbial *y* to the informational status of the PC. Since the pronoun encodes given information, it does not take away the attention given to the PVNP. In addition, the cliticization of the PP locative limits the number of new elements given at one and the same time. The preference for *y* in many French PCs is also mentioned by Legendre (2003:207). She shows that some PCs are even considered unacceptable with a full PP, as in (142 b):

- (142) a. L'autre jour je suis allé à la rivière, il y pêchait des dizaines de personnes. (ibid: 207)
 'the other day I went down to the river, there were dozens of people fishing there'
- b. ?*L'autre jour il pêchait des dizaines de personnes dans la la rivière.
 'the other day there were dozens of people fishing in the river'

These facts presented above demonstrate that French PCs are more in the need of focusing the PVNP, in this case by means of organizing the sentence structure in a way to make the NP appear in sentence-final position. When considering the general prosodic abilities in French, we may understand why.

It seems that in order to get athetic interpretation in general (cf. Section 4.1.1) in French, one often has to reorganize the sentence structure. Therefore, distinction between thetic and topic-comment sentences in French has to be made formally explicit. The formal

distinction which I have in mind is the one illustrated in the pairs of English and French below (the examples are from Zubizarreta (1998:75)):

- (143) *Le **bébé** pleure (vs. Le bébé **pleure**)
The **baby** is crying (vs. The baby is **crying**)
*Le **soleil** est sorti (vs. Le soleil est **sorti**)

If *baby* and *sun* is not intended to be the topics in the sentences, this must be shown syntactically. The focus cannot extend over both the NP and the verb.

- (144) Speak softly! A **baby** is sleeping. (Sæbø 2005:19)

- (145) a. * Un **bébé** dort
b. Y'a un **bébé** qui **dort**

The sequence *y'a* in (b), consists of the locative adverbial *y* 'there' and the third person singular form of *avoir* 'have'. *Y'a* is the spoken form of the corresponding *il y a* in standard written French. The sentence in (146) is a so-called 'presentational cleft-construction' (Lambrecht 1988). These should not be confused with the English it-cleft in which the proposition in the relative clause is 'given', as in *it was Paul who ruined the party*. Falkum (2004) concludes, along with Lambrecht (1988), that French cleft-sentences are all-new and thusthetic expressions. The difference between french and Norwegian can be seen in the examples in (146):

- (146) a. Y'a Jean qu'a telephone (Lambrecht 1988: 136)
there-has Jean that has called
'Jean called'
b. Det er Jon som har ringt
there is Jon that has called

While *Jon* in the Norwegian example is necessarily interpreted as a contrastive focus, with known information in the relative clause, the French sentence is all-new. Thus the relative clause in French is also part of the new information.

The point is however, that French is not able to distinguish betweenthetic and categorical propositions in intransitive sentences by means of prosody. (The PC *det sover en baby der inne* would be the unmarked choice in Norwegian.)

Moreover, the boundary or focus accent never appears to fall on the predicate when this is followed by some thematic element:

(147) #Mama **lisait** le livre⁵⁷

If French does not have the possibility to use accent to focus upon a verb as in the sentence above, it is not surprising that the language is unable to do the same thing with verbs in PCs.

Leaving French, there is also another argument for why the main function of the PC is not only to introduce NPs. This argument comes from sentences such as *there was nobody there*. To say about nobody that they are presented or introduced as potential topics in the subsequent discourse is of course nonsensical.

I suggest, based on the facts presented in this section, that the functions of PCs can be divided in two. We have those PCs which focus upon the verbal process and those which present a focused NP referent. The two subtypes of PCs correspond to the two functions of ‘presentational cleft constructions’ in French observed by Lambrecht (1988). He divides between event-reporting and presentational cleft-sentences. I have chosen to call the first an *eventive* PC and the latter an *entitive* PC. Lambrecht defines the distinction between the entitive and the eventive as follows:

The first of these [presentational sentences] is the situation in which a speaker intends to convey information about some referent which is not yet pragmatically accessible in the discourse, i.e. where a speaker wants to establish a new topic. [...]The second is the situation in which a speaker intends to inform the addressee of some (often unexpected or surprising) event or state of affairs whose grammatical expression involves a subject NP whose referent is not yet discourse-active and not intended to play a topic role in subsequent discourse. This is the situation in which an event-reporting utterance is required. (Lambrecht 1986:241)

Thus, according to Lambrecht, the only difference between the two subtypes is that the entitive PC introduces entities, while the eventive PC reports of events, which necessarily involve entities. The propositions expressed in these two types of PCs are both *thetic* (see section 4.1.1), in the sense that their function is not to predicate over a given referent but to assert a fact or a state of affairs. According to Brentano (1973), the basis for a *thetic* judgment is a presentation or a description of an object, either an *entity* or an *eventuality*. Thus as I suggested in part one, the Norwegian PC seems to be nothing else but an ordinary *thetic* judgment, with the only exception that it forces an ‘existential reading’ of its PVNP.

⁵⁷ French has the possibility to cliticize the object and consequently put the main accent on the verb: *Mama le lisait* ‘mama it read’.

Lambrecht remarks that the similarity between the two functions lies in the introduction of a new element that is not linked to any topic or presupposed proposition⁵⁸.

As a conclusion we may say that there is no presentational focus motivating the Norwegian PC. Norwegian PCs can be used both to present entities, as in *det kom en mann*, and to describe an event, as in *det banker noen på døra*. While the first one is very common in French, the last one is not.

To sum up, the semantic weight of the element in the sentence is closely related to the phonological and pragmatic weight. When the verb is semantically heavier than the NP, the verb is most likely to be the element that receives the main intonational and pragmatic attention. Thus we see that the highlighting of the verb or the NP also depends on the relative informativeness of the constituents. As Norwegian has the possibility to give focus only to the verb, with NPs that are rather uninformative, French was seen as typical NP-introducing, except for some event-reporting sentences with broad focus.

The discussion of the two subtypes in PC and also provides good departure point for a revision of the locative inversion (cf. section 4.1.3). On the basis of the division between entitive and eventive PCs it is now possible to characterize the LI as having an entitive function and PCs as having both an eventive and an entitive function. While the Norwegian PC may be both entitive and eventive, locative inversions only have the entitive function. Therefore, it might be reasonable to claim that locative inversions, at least in English are driven by a discourse function PFocus. For examples see section 4.1.3.

Considering the fact that the eventive PCs do not introduce or present NP-referents, is there a requirement of having ‘light’ verbs in eventive PCs?

4.2.1.2 Semantic collocation

In this section I will only briefly show how non-core verbs in the PC (unergatives) often restrict the possible PVNPs. This serves as a further support of the claim that the verb and the NP can in many circumstances be seen as one single information unit, focus extending over both verb and NP.

⁵⁸ Lambrecht (1988: 136-37) cites the following examples for the presentational and event-reporting cleft-sentences:

Y’a Jean qu’a telephone (NP-presentational)

there-has Jean that has called
‘Jean called’

Y’a le telephone qui sonne! (event-reporting)

there-has the phone that rings
‘the phone’s ringing!’

In the following, we shall see that there are some typical properties of the PCs which have to do with semantic collocation, i.e. the typical juxtaposition of a word with another word. The choice of NP may restrict the choice of verb and vice versa. The point here is to find out who is affecting who. If the intention of the utterance is to present an NP we would expect that the choice of NP restricts the possible verbs, and conversely, if the PC is eventive, the restrictions would go the other way around, thus the verb restricts the possible NPs, or the NP and the verb mutually affect each other. However, to determine whether a PC is either eventive or entitive is not easy, and for many of the PCs, the extra-linguistic context is the only decisive factor.

Levin & Rappaport Hovav (1995: 253) argue that “the informational lightness requirement can be satisfied if the activity of process that the verb describes is characteristic of the entity the verb is predicated of”. Their example is:

(148) Inside swam fish from an iridescent spectrum of colors... (L&RH *ibid*:257)

L&RH write: “swimming is a kind of motion that is characteristic of the existence of fish, so that this sentence really conveys little more than the fact that colourful fish are inside the tank.” This observation is interesting in at least three respects: first, it is relevant in relation to the fact that the verb’s meaning restricts the possible NPs since this would imply that the restriction on NPs is not solely based on thematic roles (that is what L&RH say. However, if the intention is to say that the NP, in this case *fish* is inside the tank, it seems more reasonable to claim that the NP restricts the possible verbs.). Second, in these cases focus seems to extend over both verb and NP, since both the verb and the argument reflect the same semantic content or information. Finally, the observation accounts for the non-core PCs in French. I will look at some French examples below, and compare them with Norwegian eventive PCs.

In his comparative study of presentational construction in French and Norwegian, based on the corpus of SPRIK (the corpus of “språk i contrast”), Hanisch (2004) noted that the French non-core PCs, found almost exclusively among literary texts, seemed to be a result of a more stylistic, poetic alternative to the existential *il y a*. For example, for the French sentence in (147), an existential verb is used in the corresponding Norwegian sentence:

(149) a. Il flotte dans la chambre une lueur scintillante et diffuse... (Hanisch 2004:62)

there floats in the room a gleam of light sparkling and vague

b. Det er en dis av skimrende lys i værelset...

there is a haze of shimmering light in room-the

Thus the sentence “really conveys little more than the fact that” *a haze of shimmering light* is in the room. Similarly, the sentences below are used to express that many insects are located at some previously mentioned place (the clitic *y* refers to a known or ‘given’ place, see below).

- (150) a. il y nage beaucoup d’insectes (polycarpe.homeip.net 15.03.2005)
 it there swim many of insects
 b. qu’il y nage des iguanas... (www.fpc.net 22.03.2005)
 that it there swim iguanas

Other sentences that assert the existence or location of entities by using verbs which are characteristic of the entity:

- (151) a. Il y courait une rivière d’eau potable qui alimentait tous les quartiers alentours.
 (www2.ac-toulouse.fr 15.03.05)
 it there ran a river with water potable which nourishes all the (part of) towns surrounding
 b. Il traversait maintenant une petite banlieue ouvrière, avec des manufactures ici et là. L’une d’elles était éclairée, il y ronronnait machines. (Hériaux 1980:217)
 he walked through now a little working class suburb, with factories here and there. one of them was lit up, it there hummed machines
 c. ...qu’il y rôdait des êtres terrifiants, avec un pied à la place du nez, avec des gueules enflammées... (beagle.u-bordeaux4.fr 22.03.05)
 that it there wandered creatures terrible, with a foot in the place of the nose, with the mouths set on fire
 d. car il y rodait de dangereuses créatures. (www.mpdconsulting.net 15.03.2005)
 because it there wandered dangerous creatures
 e. Il soufflait un vent chaud dans le desert
 there blowed a wind hot in the desert
 f. Il souffle un vent mauvais (cettesemaine.free.fr 06.09.2005)
 there blowed a wind bad

All examples found with the verb *rôder* include ghosts or other terrifying creatures. Likewise, the examples with *souffler* all involve the wind. All the pairings of the verbs and the NPs in these examples are presented as predictable.

Although many of these examples would lose some of their meaning if the verb was replaced by *il y a*, especially in the examples (b) and (e,f), the main function of these French sentences still seems to be that of locating or asserting the existence of the NP referent, mainly because the NP often is modified by an adjectives or PPs. We would then assume that

it is the particular NP that restricts the possible verbs in the construction. That is, if I want to say *just there, there's a river*, I could be more poetic in my description and say *just there runs a river* (*there* being a locative adverb, not an expletive). However, I could not say *just there drives a river*. The NP, on the other hand, cannot be replaced, since the intention is to locate a *river*. If the intention is to locate or assert the presence of some fishes, I could choose to use the verb *swim*.

The semantic collocation is not only typical for French PCs, the same phenomenon is observed in many Norwegian examples. Verbs and NP referents that are semantically related are often more felicitous in PCs than verbs and NPs that are not. Thus, the former sentences in (150) are more acceptable than the latter ones:

- (152) a. Det rant en elv nedover fjellsiden vs. *Det hoppet en elv nedover fjellsiden
 there flowed a river down mountainside-the vs. there jumped a river...
 b. Mjauet det en katt der inne? Vs. ??Ulte det en katt der inne?
 miaowed there a cat there in? vs. howled there a cat in there?

But in sentences without the expletive, the verb and NP combinations are totally acceptable:

- (153) a. Elva hoppet nedover fjellsiden
 river-the jumped down mountainside-the
 b. katten ulte der inne
 cat-the howled there in

I am not assuming that this is the only reason to why some sentences sound worse than others, but it is interesting to note that the semantic collocation can contribute to making the sentence acceptable. As I mentioned in the beginning of this section, this fact seem to imply that the verb and the NP form one information unit. That is, if the NP functions as a subject, the NP and the verb do not form a “broad” focus, but if the NP functions as an object in PC, the verb and the object may together form a focus. And in fact, in a PC this is highly preferred.

However, the interesting point, and the point in which French and Norwegian apparently differs, is when the verb in Norwegian cannot be replaced by a verb of existence. A sentence of this kind in which the verb cannot be replaced by an existential *be* is apparent in the sentence discussed in section 4.1.1, repeated here as (152). When my mother uttered this sentence, her intention was to say that there was so much noise outside, which necessarily involves the driving of the cars. The sentence was not used to locate the cars. In this case, the

NP is highly inferrable from the verb and seems to be part of the verbal content, functioning as a modifier rather than a presented focus.

- (154) det kjører biler her hele dagen
there are driving cars here all day-the

The pairing of the verb *kjøre* with the noun is presented as predictable. What separates this sentence from the one above (152), is that (154) focuses upon the verbal process instead of the NP referent, the sentence is therefore eventive. Characteristic of these types of sentences is that the semantic association of the verb and the NP referent does not make the verb informationally light. As both the verb and the car are like informative, the NP alone cannot be seen as restricting the choice of the verb.

In addition, there is a difference between French and Norwegian concerning what kind of PPs that are allowed in the PC. The PPs in French and Norwegian PCs are very often locational. However, Norwegian, in contrast to French, also use PCs to denote verbal processes that are directional. Hulk (1989:67) argues that French only allows independent PP's to occur in the presentational sentence. He cites the following examples:

- (155) a. il court des enfants dans le pré
there are running children in the meadow
b. *il court des enfants après moi
there are running children after me

Likewise, the French examples above cannot contain inherently directional PP *jusqu'à* 'until'.

- (156) a. Det randt en bekk helt ned til enden av dalen
b. *Il courait une rivière jusqu'au bout de la vallée
there flowed a river all down to end-the of valley
'A river flowed all the way down to the end of the valley'

This is because the entitive PCs are by definition a scene-setters. They serve to present or introduce an NP into the discourse by locating it on a scene. When directing the verbal process by adding a directional PP, the verbal process is necessarily 'new'. Thus the information structuring of the sentence in (156) cannot be as in (157), without the NP being interpreted as a contrastive focus:

- (157) #Det [rant]*presupp* [en bekk]*focus* [helt ned til enden av dalen]*presupp*

In addition, the verb is highly necessary if the PP is directional, as is illustrated by the fact that the verb cannot easily be replaced by an existential *være* ‘be’:

- (158) a. I fjor svømte det en mann helt over til England
last year swam there a man all the way over to England
b. ??I fjor var det en mann helt over til England
last year was there a man all the way over to England
c. Det vandrer spøkelser frem og tilbake foran huset hennes
there wanders ghosts back and forth in front of her house
d. *Det er spøkelser fram of tilbake foran huset hennes
there are ghosts back and forth in front of her house

Notice also the meaning difference in:

- (159) Det kommer en mann etter meg (google 14.03.05)
‘there is a man following me/ there will

- (160) Il arrive un homme après moi (google 14.03.05)
It comes a man after me

The Norwegian sentence may mean either that the man is chasing or following someone or that the speaker will be succeeded. Only the latter interpretation is possible in French. As *komme* in the latter interpretation only denotes the appearance of the NP referent, the *komme etter meg* has the additional information of movement. The first interpretation seems to report about an event instead of only focusing on the NP. If the French PCs does not allow these kinds of eventive PCs it is not surprising that the verb distribution in the two languages differ.

It would also be interesting to see if there were more differences between the two languages regarding types of locatives allowed in the PC. One way to go would be to look at differences between the acceptability of focussed locatives versus locatives which are part of the presupposition. However, I have neither the space nor the time to go into this here. In sum, the information expressed in these PCs is reports of events, not presentations of NP referents.

To sum up, a light verb can be a verb relatively predicted from its NP in that it is characteristic for the NP. I have argued that these light verbs are primarily used in the entitive PCs. In Norwegian in contrast, the verbal process can be highlighted and can therefore be seen as restricting the possible NPs. French PCs are characterized by being essentially NP-introducing, while Norwegian PC have the additional possibility of focusing the verbal process.

4.2.1.3 Perceptive Constructions

The examples with semantically associated NP referents and non-accented *non* resemble the type of construction which Sveen (1996) calls a ‘perceptive construction’. These constructions are often NP-less constructions which profile the perceptible effects of the verb, as illustrated by example (159 a). The PC in the (b) example on the other hand, does not focus upon the sound of walking. According to Sveen (ibid: 177) the verb *gå* (‘go/walk’) has two distinct uses in the two constructions:

- (161) a. Det **går** i trappa
 there walks in staircase-the
 b. Det går en mann i trappa
 there walks a man in staircase-the

While the first sentence profiles the perceptible effects of walking, such as the sound, the latter profiles the participant doing the process of walking. The same perceptible effect is present in the examples below, only this time the sentence contains an NP:

- (162) a. Hun hørte at det **gikk** ’non’ i trappa
 She heard that there walked someone in stairs-the
 b. Han hørte det summet bier inne på soveværelse
 he heard there murmured bees in at bed room
 c. Det banket noe mot ruta
 there knocked something against window-the
 d. Det lukter kaffe i stua
 there smells coffee in living room-the

These examples function as perceptive constructions in the way that they focus on the sensations of the verbal process, and in addition they are structurally identical with the PC, containing a postverbal NP. It may be difficult to decide whether a sentence can be considered as perceptive or not, and that is exactly my point; if we can say that some PCs are quite similar to the perceptive construction, which highlights the sensation of the verbal process, then it would be wrong to call all PCs ‘NP presenting’. Consider also the two sentences in (161):

- (163) Det hadde jo velta inn [post]_{NP}
 there had yes flowed in post
 Det hadde jo velta inn [med post]_{PP}

It is not important in this kind of utterance whether the NP is expressed as the object to the verb or whether it is the object to the PP. The meaning is the same in the two utterances.

As we saw in section 4.1.4, the PC also requires verbs which are somehow observable. However, in spite of these similarities, they differ on the following point: the PVNP in the PC can often be placed in the preverbal subject position, whereas the PVNP in the perceptive construction cannot, as shown by the following examples⁵⁹:

- (164) a. Det bor forbrytere i skogen
 there lives criminals in wood-the
 b. Forbrytere bor i skogen
 criminals lives in wood-the
 c. *Skogen bor forbrytere
 wood-the lives criminals

- (165) a. Det lukter kaffe i stua
 there smells coffee in living room-the
 b. *Kaffe lukter i stua
 coffee smells in living room-the
 c. Stua lukter kaffe
 living room-the smells coffee

Sveen (1996) compares the perceptive constructions with constructions with weather verbs, and writes that “weather-verbs share with core perceptive verbs the property of denoting some event which makes a direct impression on our sensory apparatus” (Sveen *ibid*: 180). He further connects this with the acceptability of verbs in PCs in general, claiming that “whether the impersonal active use of a verb is felicitous has to do with whether the activity the verb denotes is perceptible” (Sveen *ibid*: 86-88. cf. 4.1.3 above).

The perceptive constructions do not seem to be very usual in French, and some of the Norwegian constructions without objects are not allowed in French, such as:⁶⁰

- (166) *il/ça frappe sur la porte
 it knocks on the door

- (167) Det banker (noen) på døra
 there knocks (someone) on door-the

⁵⁹ This is not meant to be a sufficient test to separate between perceptible and PC constructions, as some PCs have the locative first in the corresponding sentence without expletive:

det mangler sukker i denne kaka
 denne kaka mangler sukker

⁶⁰ Hanisch (2004: 101) notices that in spoken language, many verbs can appear in a sort of impersonal construction introduced by *ça*. He cites the following examples:

Qu’est-ce que Marie est bavarde! Quand elle est là, ça parle tout le temps!
 how Marie is talkative-when she is there, it talks all the time

Instead, French often use the impersonal *on* ‘one’, as in (171):

- (168) On frappe à la porte
One knocks at the door

Though there are a lot of examples with the verb *smell*:

- (169) a. Ca sent encore le gaz! (www.presidentielles.net 09.05.2005)
It smells still the gas
'it still smells gas (in here)'
b. il sent le brûlé dans la cuisine (Grevisse 1980: 307)
there smells the burnt in the kitchen
c. ça brûle quelque part
it burns somewhere

French may have an object after a weather verb, and “il fourmille des exemples” of expletive constructions with a verb and a PP⁶¹:

- (170) a. Il pleut des roses sur Manhattan⁶²
b. –vous parlez d’erreurs de jugement. Mais est-ce que vous avez des exemples?(Hériaux 1980:224)
-Ah! Mais il fourmille des exemples.
but it swarms of examples

It should be noted that most Germanic languages distinguish between the perceptive construction and normal PCs, in that they use different kinds of subjects in the two constructions. That is, as Vikner (1997:214) points out, the subject in weather verbs and perceptive constructions in Danish is *det* ‘it’ while the subject in a PC is *der* ‘there’: *Det brænder her/der brænder et hus* (Ebeling 2000: 91, footnote). Though, some searches at google show that the distinction is not as clear-cut as expected:

- (171) Det lugter en sommervarm dag
it smells a hot summers day
(Der lugter en smule af gammeldags pædagogisk ungdomsfilm)
there smells a bit of old-fashioned educational youth film

⁶¹ One often find examples of PCs and weather verbs also introduced by *ca*:
...mais ca reste une personne a qui je pense encore... (pseudoalacon.skyblog.com 09.05.2005)
...du moins si ca pleut pas... (mimile.joueb.com 09.05.2005)

⁶² Notice that the latin construction of the type ‘there rains NP’, has the PVNP in accusative case:
Pluit sanguinem
Rains blood-acc

The same is true for English, as illustrated by (131) and (132) (the examples are from Bolinger 1977:79):

- (172) a. it smelled something putrid in the kitchen
b. it's dripping water from every pipe

The sentences is structurally identical with the Norwegian PCs, but functionally identical with perceptive constructions, thus similar to the sentence *det lukter kaffe i stua*. Therefore the pronoun *it* is exactly what one should expect; both the examples in (165) contains verbs and PVNPs saying something about the NPs in the locative PP, as illustrated in (166):

- (173) the kitchen smelled (something putrid)
the pipes are dripping (water)

It thus seems that the constructions with perceptible verbs such as *smell*, are considered to be identical with perceptive constructions without NPs.

As a final remark I will mention that both French and Norwegian have impersonal passives, though in french this is a written phenomenon. Hanisch (2004: 25), notes that some verbs sound worse in French than they do in Norwegian, as illustrated by (172) and (173):

- (174) Det ble danset, drukket og sunget
There was danced, drunk and sung
'there were dancing, drinking and singing'

- (175) ?ill a été dansé, bu et chanté
There have been danced, drunk and sung

Instead one would use the impersonal *on* 'one' in French:

- (176) On dansait, buvait, on chantait
One danced, drank and sung

There are probably a lot of impersonal passive sentences which are eventive, as the ones above, and it may be interesting to see if there are many differences as concerns French and Norwegian impersonal passive constructions and if they are related to the eventive/entitive contrast. This does not fall within the scope of this study and will have to be investigated in a separate work.

To sum up, many of the Norwegian PC resemble those constructions which Sveen (1996) calls 'perceptive' constructions. These focuses upon the verbal process, and are

indifferent as regards the participant causing the process. Whether the construction takes *it* or *there* is not essential. The relevant point here is that Norwegian also has other type of constructions with expletives, some with and some without PVNPs. It is not crucial whether Norwegian expletive constructions have one object, two objects (cf. section 2.3), or no objects. French on the other hand, does not seem to have many ‘perceptive’ constructions, except for the example with the verb *smell* which involved a PVNP.

4.2.2 Summary

In this second part of the analysis, the main goal has been to show that there is a functional difference between the Norwegian and French PCs. I have discussed the relative informativeness of the verb and the NP in terms of intonational marking and semantic weight. I noticed that in Norwegian, the verb can be accented as in *the **jobber** faktisk noen her*, and that this is not possible in French. Further I remarked that a possible explanation to the fact that French does not focus on the verb as in the Norwegian PCs lies in the intonation pattern in French, i.e. French generally places the accent sentence-finally. However, French seems to have some PCs where both the verb and the NP is focussed, as in *Il y courait une rivière d'eau potable*, but the PVNP is nevertheless the most informative element and cannot easily be replaced by an indefinite pronoun. Based on these insights and Lambrecht’s division of French cleft-constructions, I divided the PC into two subtypes; the entitive and the eventive. While Norwegian PCs are basically used in two ways: expressing introduction of NP-arguments and reporting about events, the French PC only conveys the first meaning. This was further confirmed when examining the semantic character of the verb and the NP in French and Norwegian.

5 Conclusion

In this thesis I set out to investigate critically the following claim: the presentational construction is driven by a requirement of realizing the presentational focus, which is placed in object position. According to Bresnan (1994) and Lødrup (1999), the presentational focus is said to be the motivation for both LIs and PCs.

In chapter 2, I showed that the PCs Norwegian and French are structurally quite similar, and that both languages have the possibility of having unergative verbs in the construction. However, the verb distribution in the two languages differs significantly, so a central question in the thesis is why this is the case.

In order to answer this question, in chapter 3 I first presented the theoretical framework which serves as the background for my analyses in chapter 4. I also presented the theory of LFG, which forms the basis for the analyses of Bresnan (1994) and Lødrup (1999). The first framework has to do with information structuring and the pragmatic understanding of focus and topic. It was shown that an important factor affecting information structure is the placement of stress or accent. Next, in section 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, I presented Bresnan's (1994) and Lødrup's (1999) analyses and the problems they pose. The main problem for both analyses was how to account for graded acceptability of verbs.

Chapter 4 was divided in two: one part examining semantic properties of the Norwegian PC and the other part comparing its communicative function with the function of French PCs. I began by investigating the nature of the restrictions on the PC and the so-called 'deagentivization effect' and showed that many of the properties commonly associated with PCs are in fact properties common for allthetic, i.e. non-topic, sentences. The first of these properties is the fact that the verb is not in a predication relation with the argument. Instead, the argument forms an information unit together with the predicate. To distinguish arguments that occurred inthetic sentences from those in categorical sentences, I chose to call the argument a 'theme'. Next, I showed that the subject position is associated with a presupposed reading and that therefore, the object position seems to be the unmarked position for indefinite NPs. The NP in the PC was also characterized as being weak. I then went on to argue, in section 4.1.3, that PCs and LIs are two distinct constructions with different interpretations of their NP arguments, since PCs have an existential reading which is not found in the LI. This means that the claim that both constructions are motivated by presentational focus is

problematic. I ended part one of the analysis by characterizing the verbs that are not allowed in the PC as ‘individual-level predicates’. Individual-level predicates must have strong NPs and do not form an information unit together with their argument. Therefore, these predicates are excluded from allthetic expressions in general, asthetic expressions do not have a topic argument.

In part two of the analysis I examined the function of the PC in Norwegian by looking at phonological and semantic ‘weight’, and compared it with the function of French PCs. Even if the formal properties of the French and Norwegian presentational constructions are quite similar, my studies have revealed that French and Norwegian use this construction differently. I have argued for a distinction between eventive and entitive PCs, on the assumption that Norwegian and French PCs differ as to whether they are typically eventive or entitive. Eventive PCs focus primarily on the event denoted by the verb, while entitive PCs serve to introduce an NP into the discourse. In Norwegian, both types seem to be equally acceptable and productive. French, on the other hand, seems to restrict itself to the entitive type. This is because in French PCs, the postverbal NP generally constitutes the most informative element. My suggestion is that a possible reason for why French PCs are used primarily in an NP-introducing way may be found in the intonation pattern in French. Finally, I showed that Norwegian PCs can be compared with the so-called ‘perceptive’ construction, which does not have an NP referent. As a conclusion I said that it is not crucial whether Norwegian expletive constructions have an object or not.

In other words: What this thesis has shown is that the presentational construction in Norwegian is not motivated by a presentational focus; the PC seems rather to be an ordinarythetic sentence, with the exception that it necessarily has a weak NP, i.e. it has an existential reading of its NP. This distinguishes it from locative inversion. In addition, an analysis of the formal properties of the Norwegian and French PCs cannot alone account for the differences between the verb distribution in the two languages. The crucial factor in such an explanation is the observation that the Norwegian PC has two possible discourse functions, whereas French has only one. When Norwegian has the possibility to use the construction both to present NPs and to report about events, it is not surprising that the Norwegian PC allows a much wider range of verbs to appear in the construction.

Finally, I would like to note that in the course of this work, new paths of possible research have appeared. One of the most important ones is that the analysis put forward here might be fruitful for an investigation of the impersonal passive construction. Many of the

properties associated with PCs, such as the definiteness restriction, also apply to these passive constructions. It would be interesting to see if these can also be divided into eventive and entitive subtypes with the cross-linguistic differences this may have caused. Like Horace says: “*Bis repetita placent.*” This particular pleasure, however, ends here.

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