VIII : Chapter Eight : Subjects

It was previously assumed that "subjects occupy the specifier position within IP" (151); but it will be shown that "subjects originate in the specifier position within VP, and are subsequently raised to spec-IP for checking purposes by a movement operation known as **(subject) raising.**" (151)

Looking first at the structure of *expletive* sentences with the *expletive* **there** (i.e. *a dummy* or *pleonastic* constituent), we find that "*expletive* **there** seems to have the categorial status of a pronominal determiner since like other pronominal determiners (i.e. personal pronouns as *he/she/it*) ,it can occur in sentence tags.

1. (i) *There* is nobody living **there.**
   (ii) *There* is someone knocking **at the door.**
   (iii) *There* are several patients waiting to see the doctor.

2.(i) *There* is nobody living **there,** is *there?*
   (ii) *There* are several patients waiting to see the doctor, aren't *there*?

It is to be noted that in sentence (1) (i), there are two different occurrences of *there.* The second occurrence is a locative pronoun; but the first occurrence is an *expletive* (i.e. *a dummy* or *pleonastic*) constituent. It has an unstressed vowel */∂/* and does not have a locative interpretation. It also has no intrinsic reference.

Evidence that the pronoun *there* occupies the specifier position in IP is provided by the claim that the auxiliary *is/are* can be moved in front of it (into COMP) in yes-no structures.

3.(i) **Is** *there* nobody living there?
   (ii) **Are** *there* several patients waiting to see the doctor?