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Empty expletives and the EPP

Since its introduction in Chomsky (1981), the EPP has remained mysterious. There is no consensus on what it may derive from, or why it should exist (but cf. Haider 2010 for an interesting approach).

Within the last 20 years, various proposals were made that connect the EPP to some phonological property. In particular, there is a class of approaches claiming that the EPP requires that SpecT be filled by some *phonologically overt* category (e.g. Holmberg 2000, Bobaljik 2002, Landau 2007, Richards 2016, McFadden & Sundharsan 2018). Such a view appears to be incompatible with the very concept of an empty expletive. In my talk, I argue that there are reasons to assume that empty expletives exist. If the arguments are valid, this class of approaches to the EPP may be dismissed.