

# The Syntax of Existential Sentences in Tagalog<sup>\*</sup>

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## Abstract:

This paper investigates the syntax of existential sentences in Tagalog, which pose a particular analytical challenge due to morpho-syntactic as well as semantic properties that are uncharacteristic or ordinary types of finite clauses in the language. Detailed arguments are provided, however, to show that existential sentences have a rather unexceptional syntax after all—they are projected from an unaccusative predicate (the existential verb) which selects a DP as its sole internal argument. The unusual characteristics of existential sentences are argued to follow from a particular compositional semantic analysis of the existential predicate.

Keywords: Tagalog, Existential sentences, impersonal syntax, definiteness effect, case.

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The following abbreviations are used to gloss the examples:

Agr = Agreement

Asp = Aspect

S = Subject

NS = Non-Subject

Obl = Oblique

Loc = Locative

Pl = Plural

L = Linker

L(Rel) = Linker introducing a relative clause

L(Comp) = Linker introducing an embedded clause

Inv = Inversion marker (= *ay*)

## 1 Introduction

This paper investigates the syntax of existential constructions in Tagalog. Existential sentences in Tagalog exhibit certain morpho-syntactic as well as semantic properties that distinguish them from other “ordinary” types of clauses in the language. Ignoring these idiosyncracies at first, I will argue in the first half of this paper (Section 3-4) that existential sentences have a rather unexceptional syntax after all. In particular, I will argue that existential clauses are projected from an unaccusative predicate that selects a DP as its sole internal argument. The evidence to be discussed will positively support this analysis, and—at the same time—argues against alternative analyses of the sort that posits a Small Clause within the structure of existential sentences (Stowell 1981; Safir 1982, 1985; Reuland 1983; Freeze 1992; among others).

The properties of existential sentences that distinguish them from more canonical types of clauses include the following: (i) The internal argument of the existential predicate exhibits a definiteness effect, though one that is quite different from the kind of definiteness effect that conditions other internal arguments (e.g., the direct object of a transitive verb); (ii) The existential predicate always occurs in a clause structure that is impersonal (i.e., has no overt subject); (iii) The internal argument of the existential predicate is uninflected for morphological case; and (iv) The internal argument of the existential predicate is preceded by the same type of “linker” that is found with NPs that co-occur with a modifier (an adjective or determiner), yet there is no obvious modifier of the existential predicate’s internal argument.

Once the basic syntax of existential sentences is in place, I will propose (in Section 5-6) that the semantic and morpho-syntactic properties named above follow from the interaction of the syntax of existential sentences with a particular compositional semantic analysis of the existential predicate, *mayroón*. I will propose that the existential predicate is actually morpho-syntactically complex—consisting of the element *may* and a root predicate *roón* (corresponding to the distal locative pro-form meaning ‘there’, which independently serves as a root for other predicates in the language—e.g., the predicate locative *naroón*, ‘be there’). Syntactically, I propose that *may* is a member of a closed-class set of functional elements, which is represented in the syntax as the functional category, a (the adjectival analogue of Chomsky’s 1995 functional category, *v*). Semantically, I analyze *may* as having a denotation equivalent to an existential quantifier. I will attempt to show that properties (i)-(iv) mentioned above follow from this particular analysis.

Overall, the analysis aims to derive some of the more idiosyncratic aspects of the syntax and semantics of existential sentences not from the syntax of existential sentences per se, but rather from the idiosyncratic lexical-semantic properties of the item that serves as the existential predicate. This work therefore has a broader interest in elucidating some of the ways in which syntax and (lexical)-semantics interact.

## 2 Background

Tagalog is a predicate initial language. The predicate may belong to any syntactic category (verb, noun, adjective, or preposition). Consider the examples in (1). Note that there is no copula in clauses containing a non-verbal main predicate (as in 1c-d).

- (1) a. *Humalik si Juan ng babae.*  
Agr.Asp.kiss s Juan ns woman  
'Juan kissed a woman.'
- b. *In-iligtas ni Juan ang bata.*  
Agr.Asp-rescue ns Juan s child  
'Juan rescued the child.'
- c. *Bastós ang tao kung tumitig sa kapwa tao.*  
rude s person if Agr.Asp.stare Obl. other person  
'A person is rude if he stares at another person.' (LE 166)
- d. *Anak ng mayama-ng tao siya.*  
son ns rich-L man he(s)  
'He is the son of a rich man.'

With the exception of certain impersonal clauses, all clauses have one argument that can be characterized as the subject. In the examples in (1), the subject is the argument that is inflected with the morphological case *ang* (realized *si* with proper-names). Verbal predicates (as in 1a-b) are inflected for agreement with the subject. This agreement does not involve features such as person, number, or gender, but rather seems to involve more abstract features of the subject such as semantic role or abstract Case (see Rackowski 2002 and Pearson 2005 for an overview of the issues relating to the characterization of this agreement).

All other arguments within the clause inflect for morphological case as well. Non-oblique internal arguments are marked with *ng* ([*nang*]) (realized *ni* with proper names), while oblique arguments are marked *sa* (realized *kay* with proper names).

Previous generative studies of Tagalog clauses structure have positively established that the subject is syntactically the most prominent argument of the clause (Guilfoyle, Hung, and Travis 1992; Richards 1993; Rackowski 2002; Aldridge 2003; Sabbagh 2005; among others).<sup>1</sup> There is, however, disagreement within this literature concerning the question of the exact syntactic location of the subject. Some argue that the subject remains internal to the maximal projection of the predicate (Richards 1993; Rackowski 2002; Aldridge 2003). Others argue that the subject raises out of the predicate in the courses of the derivation to a predicate external position—namely, Spec, TP (Guilfoyle, Hung, and Travis 1992; Sabbagh 2005). On the later view, Tagalog clauses

<sup>1</sup> See Miller (1988) and Kroeger (1993) for arguments that Tagalog is a non-configurational language in the sense of Hale (1984). For reasons of space, I will not be able to contrast my assumptions about configurationality with those of the authors cited above.

have the same basic design as English clauses, except that—in order to capture the predicate-initial word order—this subject position is projected to the right. For our purposes, we need not decided between these two hypotheses. I will assume, however, that strings consisting of a subject (inflected with *ang/si*) and a predicate must minimally involve a projection of TP. This claim is consistent with both views on the syntactic position of the subject discussed above, given the additional hypothesis (assumed, in one way or another by each of the authors named above) that agreement inflection on verbal predicates is the result of a relation between the inflectional head of the clause—Tense—and the subject.

### 3 Tagalog Existentials: Preliminary Analysis

Some examples of the existential construction in Tagalog are given in (2)-(3). Observe that the construction consists minimally of an existential predicate *mayroón* (as in (2)) or simply *may* (as in (3)), followed by a nominal phrase (henceforth, the *pivot*). The pivot may be followed by other material such as a locative PP (see (2a) and (3a,b)) or a complex constituent consisting of an additional predicative element, such as a verb (see (2b)).

- (2) a. Mayroó-ng aksidente dito kahapon.  
       exist.there-L accident here yesterday  
       ‘There was an accident here yesterday.’
- b. Mayroo-ng mga bata’ na hindi’ nag-aaral  
       exist.there-L Pl. child L(Rel) not Agr.Asp-study  
       ‘There are children who don’t study.’
- (3) a. May malaki-ng disyerto sa Australya.  
       exist big L desert Loc Australia  
       ‘There is a big desert in Australia.’ (LE 450)
- b. May mga tao sa labás.  
       exist Pl. person Loc outside  
       ‘There are people outside.’ (LE 905)

#### 3.1 The Existential Predicate

Concentrating on the existential predicate in the examples in (2)-(3), the first thing to note is that this predicate is an adjective. Observe, for instance, that the existential predicate is not inflected for aspect—a proto-typical property of adjectives throughout the language.<sup>2</sup> Second, verbs but not adjectives can occur in the predicate position of an

<sup>2</sup> See Sabbagh (2005, 2006) for discussion of adjectives in Tagalog. Note that tense is not overtly marked on verbal predicates. Rather, it appears that verbal predicates only inflect for aspect. I will assume throughout this paper that although tense is not overtly marked, it is syntactically projected.

embedded non-finite clause selected by a verb such as *gusto* ('want'). Consider the following minimal pair.

- (4) Gusto ko-ng [sumaya ngayon].  
 want I(ns)-L(Comp) Agr.Inf.happy now  
 'I want to be happy now.'
- (5) \*Gusto ko-ng [masaya ngayon].  
 want I(ns)-L(Comp) happy now  
 (I want to be happy now.)

Like the adjective in (5), the existential predicate *mayroón* cannot appear in the predicate position of the non-finite clause selected by *gusto*, as the ungrammaticality of the example in (6) demonstrates. Compare (6) with the example in (7), which shows that the verbal existential predicate, *magkaroón* (discussed in more detail below) can occur in this environment.

- (6) \*Wala'-ng hindi' gusto-ng [mayroon kapayapaan sa Pilipinas].  
 not.exist-L not want-L(Comp) exist.there peace Loc Philippines  
 (There isn't anyone who doesn't want there to be peace in the Philippines.)
- (7) Wala'-ng hindi' gusto-ng [magka-roon ng kapayapaan sa Pilipinas].  
 not.exist-L not want-L(Comp) Inf.exist-there ns peace Loc Philippines  
 There isn't anyone who doesn't want peace in the Philippines.  
 (*Pinoy Weekly*, August 25, 2006)

I take this contrast to show that the existential predicate *mayroón* is an adjective, while *magkaroón* is a verb.

In addition to its categorial status as an adjective, observe that the existential predicate in the examples in (2) appears to be a complex word consisting of the element *may*, which I will gloss out of convenience as 'exist', in addition to the element *roón*. This *roón* is at least homophonous with the distal pro-form locative meaning 'there, in it', which functions independently as an adverb, as shown in (8). This pro-form also functions as the root of the predicate locative *naroón* 'be there' as in (9a), as well as the locative motion verb *pumaroón* 'to go there', as shown in (9b).

- (8) Pumunta ka roón sa tindaha-ng iyón.  
 Agr.Imp.go you(s) there Loc store-L that  
 'Go over there to that store.' (LE 456)
- (9) a. Na-roón sa Maynila si Juan.  
 Pred.there Loc Manila s Juan.  
 'Juan is there in Manila.'

- b. *Puma-roón ka at tingnán mo kung ano*  
 Agr.Asp.go-there you(s) and Agr.Asp.see you(ns) Comp what  
 ang nangyayari.  
 s Agr.Asp.happen  
 ‘Go there and see what is happening.’ (LE 457)

Later on in Section 5, I will argue that the *roón* that appears as part of the existential predicate (henceforth, existential-*roón*) is the same syntactically and semantically as the *roón* that appears in the predicates in (9) (henceforth, locative-*roón*).

The fact that *may* can occur without *roón*, as in the examples in (3), taken together with the observation that *roón* seems to have independent uses, as demonstrated with respect to examples (8)-(9), makes it seem plausible that *mayroón* might be decomposed into two syntactically independent components. If this is the right way of looking at things, then we ought to ask what syntactic status these elements have, and how they contribute to the overall syntactic structure as well as the meaning of the existential construction. I leave this question open for the time being (returning to it later in Section 5-6), and treat *mayroón* for now as a single (un-analyzable) word that functions as the main predicate of an existential sentence.

### 3.2 The Pivot is an Internal Argument

Existential sentences like (2)-(3) offer two surprises, in comparison with the canonical types of clauses discussed in Section 2. First, they are impersonal clauses in the sense that they do not have an overt subject (I elaborate on this point immediately below). Second, the pivot is not inflected for morphological case. Observe also that when the existential predicate is the full *mayroón*, the pivot is preceded by a linker, which is realized as the enclitic *-ng* on the word that immediately precedes it (usually, the predicate *mayroón* itself).

If the pivot were a simple NP rather than a DP, then the fact that it is uninflected for case may well follow from the hypothesis that (in certain languages, at least) only full-fledged DPs inflect for case. However, the pivot is a full DP and not a simple NP, a fact that the examples in (10) confirm. These examples show that the pivot may be headed by various (indefinite) determiners. If we assume, following Abney (1987), that determiners head their own projection, then it follows that the pivot is a DP rather than a mere NP.

- (10) a. *Mayroó-ng [DP isa-ng wika-ng opisyal] para sa buo-ng bansa.*  
 exist.there-L a-L language-L official for Obl whole-L nation  
 ‘There is an official language for the whole nation.’  
 b. *May [DP isa-ng lalaki] sa Cesarea na ang pangalan ay Cornelio.*  
 exist a-L man Loc Cesarea Comp s name Inv. Cornelio  
 ‘There was a man in Cesarea whose name was Cornelio.’ (TB)

- c. Hindi' ko in-isip na mayroó-ng [DP kahit sino-ng  
not I(ns) Agr.Asp.think Comp exist.there-L even who-L  
tao] doon.  
person there  
'I didn't think that there was anyone (lit., even+who) there.'
- d. Mayroó-ng [DP ila-ng mga dahilan kung bakit atrasado  
exist.there-L a.few-L Pl. reason Comp why late  
ang mga bayad]...  
s Pl. payment  
'There are a few reasons why the payments are late.' (GP 1)
- e. Mayroó-ng [DP marami-ng ilaw] sa silid sa itaas na  
exist.there-L many-L lamp Loc room Loc upper Comp  
pinagkakatiipunan nila.  
gathered we(ns)  
'There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered.' (TB)

The absence of case marking on the pivot makes it initially difficult to determine what the grammatical function of the pivot is. Two observations, however, suggest at least that it is not a subject. First, alongside adjectival *may(roón)*, there is also a verbal existential predicate, *magkaroón*. The verbal existential predicate inflects for aspect and, as illustrated in the examples in (11), is apparently correlated with the presence of morphological case inflection on the pivot. Significantly, the morphological case that the pivot inflects for is the same morphological case (*ng* [nang]) that marks non-oblique internal arguments (namely, either a direct object (see (1a) above) or an agent argument that has not been promoted to subject (see (1b) above)).

- (11) a. Magkáka-roón ng isá-ng rebisyón ng librón-ng iyán.  
Asp.exist-there ns one-L revision of book-L this  
'There will be a revision of this book.' (LE 1568)
- b. Nagka-roón ng giyera sa Europe.  
Asp.exist-there ns war Loc Europe  
'There was a war in Europe.'
- c. Madalas na nagkaka-roón ng lindol sa Japan.  
frequently L Asp.exist-there ns earthquake Loc Japan  
'There are frequently earthquakes in Japan.'

Assuming the morpho-syntax to be a reliable guide, this observation suggests that the pivot is an internal argument rather than the subject of the existential clause. (I return to verbal existential sentences in Section 5.)

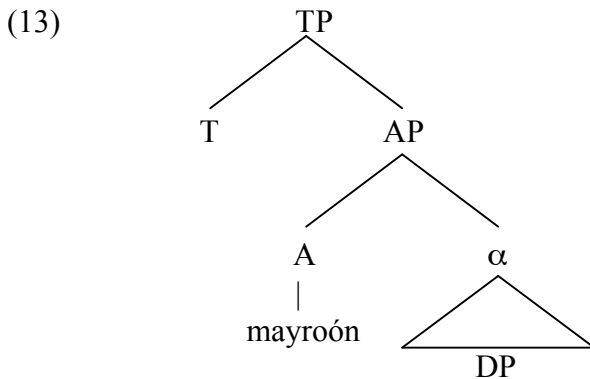
Second, the existential predicate *may(roón)* is also the predicate used to express possession. Possessive constructions, as exemplified in (12), appear to have the same basic syntax as existentials, consisting of the existential predicate followed by an unmarked (i.e., caseless) DP. They differ minimally from existential constructions, however, in that there is an additional argument that corresponds semantically to the

possessor of the objected denoted by the pivot. Significantly, this possessor argument is morphologically marked with *ang/si*—the same case that marks subjects in personal clauses.

- (12) a. [Mayroó-ng malaki-ng aso] *si Maria*.  
           exist.there-L big-L dog s Maria  
           ‘Maria has a big dog.’  
       b. [Mayroó-ng pera-ng Americano] *si Juan*.  
           exist.there-L money-L American s Juan  
           ‘Juan has some American money.’

Since the possessor argument is the subject in the examples (12) (again, assuming that the case-morphology is a reliable guide), it follows that the DP following the existential predicate (i.e., the pivot) is not the subject of these clauses. Assuming, furthermore, that the pivot bears the same grammatical relation in existential sentences that it does in examples like (12), it follows that the pivot is not the subject of existential sentences either.<sup>3</sup>

Bringing these observations together, we can conclude at this point that the pivot is an internal argument, which I will take for now to mean simply that it is not external to the predicate phrase, but rather contained somewhere within it. Taking *may(roón)* to be the head of this predicate phrase, we can assume that existential constructions in Tagalog have, at least, the partial, structure represented in (13).<sup>4</sup>



<sup>3</sup> I will not have more to say about the possessive-existential in this paper. For concreteness, I assume that the possessor argument is an (optional) external argument of the existential predicate.

<sup>4</sup> I assume that existential sentences headed by the verbal predicate *magkaroon* have the same basic structure, except that the verbal existential predicate, being categorically a verb, projects a VP rather than an AP.

I leave open for now the possibility that the subject position (Spec, TP) is either occupied by a null expletive or not projected all together.



The next section will focus on determining the internal structure of the node labeled  $\alpha$  in (13). In particular, I will consider the question of whether  $\alpha$  has a complex internal structure such as that of a Small Clause, or whether it is simply a DP. Anticipating the answer, I will argue that the existential predicate is an unaccusative predicate that selects a single DP internal argument—i.e., that  $\alpha$  in (13) is simply a DP.

#### 4 The Argument Structure of the Existential Predicate

What is the argument structure of the existential predicate? As noted with respect to the examples above, the pivot of the existential predicate may be followed by a variety of elements such as a locative PP or a predicative element of some kind. The question of interest, then, is how this material is integrated into the syntax of the existential construction. An initial possibility to consider is that the existential predicate selects a Small Clause complement, and that this other material serves as the predicate of the Small Clause (see, e.g., Stowell 1978, 1981; Chomsky 1981, 1986; Safir 1985, Lasnik 1992, and others). Under this analysis, schematized in (14), the pivot of the existential is the subject of the Small Clause predicate.

(14) [ *mayroón* [<sub>SC</sub> DP XP ] ]

I will argue against this analysis in what follows, and argue instead that existential predicate is an unaccusative predicate that selects a simple DP as its sole internal argument (see, e.g., Jenkins 1972; Williams 1984; and Chung 1987). The additional material, I will argue, is merged either as an adjunct (in the case of locative PPs) or as relative clause modifying the pivot.<sup>5</sup>

##### 4.1 The Locative PP

Consider the example in (15), repeated from earlier:

(15) *Mayroó-ng aksidente dito kahapon.*  
 exist.there-L accident here yesterday  
 ‘There was an accident here yesterday.’

If the existential predicate selects a Small Clause complement, then the most obvious candidate for the predicate of this Small Clause would be the locative

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<sup>5</sup> As far as I am aware, Tagalog does not have any other attested examples of small clauses—e.g., as complements to perception verbs or verbs like *want*, *consider*, etc. Thus, it is impossible to contrast the Small Clause hypothesis for existential sentences with other known properties of small clauses in the language. My argumentation, therefore, will rely on contrasting the small clause hypothesis for existential sentences with the properties of Small Clauses based on languages where small clauses are better attested.

expressions following the pivot (*dito* ‘here’). As it happens, there is a significant language internal reason for rejecting this analysis, relating—in particular—to the morpho-syntactic properties of locative expressions. Concretely, it is impossible for an unmarked locatives to serve as a predicate in Tagalog. In order for a locative PP to serve as the main predicate of a clause, for instance, the locative case prefix must additionally be inflected with the prefix *na*.

- (16) \*(Na)sa kati sila nang dumaán ang bagyo.  
 Pred.Loc shore they(s) when Agr.Asp.hit s storm  
 ‘They were onshore when the storm hit.’ (LE 318)

Locatives that function as arguments or adjuncts, by contrast, never inflect in this manner:

- (17) Naupó’ siya (\*na)sa kandungan ng kanya-ng ina.  
 Agr.Asp.sit he(s) Pred.Loc lap ns his-L mother  
 ‘He sat on his mother’s lap.’

In this way, the locative phrase that appears in existential constructions patterns with locative arguments/adjuncts rather than with locative predicates. When the locative phrase that occurs in an existential sentence is inflected with *na*, the result is ungrammatical.

- (18) May malaki-ng disyerto (\*na)sa Australya.  
 exist big L desert Pred.Loc Australia  
 ‘There is a big desert in Australia.’

The only way to render (18) grammatical with the predicate locative inflection is to add a linker following the pivot, as in (19). As will become clear from the arguments in the next two sub-sections, however, the presence of the linker here indicates that the locative predicate is merged with the pivot as a relative clause modifier.

- (19) May malaki-ng disyerto-ng nasa Australya.  
 exist big-L desert- L(Rel) Pred.Loc Australia  
 ‘There is a big desert that is in Australia.’

Overall, then, the likelihood that the locative phrase following the pivot in the existential is a Small Clause predicate is undermined by the observation that the locative phrase does not exhibit the morpho-syntax consistent with its function as a locative predicate.

To counter this argument, one might make the suggestion that the inflection on the predicate locatives serves the same function as the copula in a language like (Standard) English—namely, as the bearer of tense-aspect when the main predicate of the clause is non-verbal (cf. *Mary \*(is) in the house*). If so, then the absence of this inflection in the context of the existential construction might be explained away by appealing to the absence of an independent Tense-Aspect projection within the Small Clause (cf. *I saw*

[*Mary (\*is) in the house*]). This explanation, however, is under-motivated given that the additional inflection that occurs with predicate locatives in no way enables the locative phrase to inflect for tense-aspect. Additionally, other non-verbal predicates in Tagalog function as matrix predicates without a copular or added inflection that enables them to inflect for tense-aspect. In short, there does not seem to be a general requirement in Tagalog (in contrast to English and other languages) that tense-aspect be realized on some lexical item in the clause. Given this, it seems unlikely that the inflection on the predicate locative could itself be related to tense-aspect in the way that the copula in a language like English is.

To summarize, the locative phrase that occurs in existential sentences is, in all likelihood, not a Small Clause predicate.<sup>6</sup> The observation relating to its morpho-syntax suggests that it is more plausibly analyzed as an adjunct. I assume this analysis for the remainder of the discussion.

## 4.2 Complex Existentials

Having ruled out the possibility that the locative phrase occurring in simple existential sentences serves as a Small Clause predicate, let us turn next to *complex existentials*. In complex existentials, the pivot is followed by the linker *na* (optionally realized as *-ng*, after vowels and nasal consonants), which is followed by a constituent that is headed by a predicate (a verb, adjective, or predicate locative (see (19) above)). Some representative examples are given in (20) (The glossing of the linker following the pivot (as L(Relative)) reflects the analysis of these constructions that I will argue for, but can be ignored for now.)

- (20) a. Mayroó-ng mga bata na hindi' nag-aaral.  
           exist.there-L Pl child L(Rel) not Agr.Asp-study  
           'There are children (who are) not studying.'

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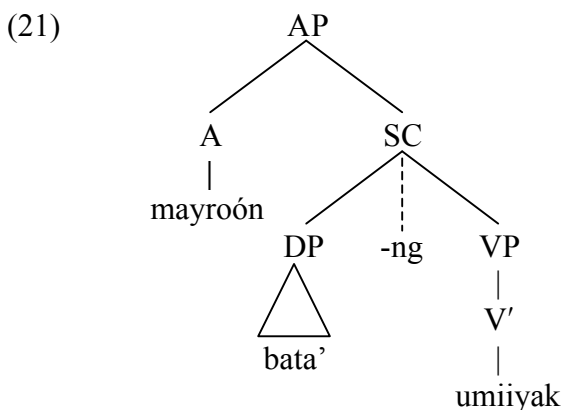
<sup>6</sup> By the same reasoning, we can also rule out an analysis in which the *may* is the higher predicate that selects a small clause complement headed by *roón* (cf. Moro 1996 for a similar analysis of existential sentences in Italian and English).

- (i) [AP *may* [SC *roón* DP ]

Assuming that *roón* in existential sentences is the same lexical item that functions as the locative meaning 'there' (see Section 5 for arguments), we would expect it here to inflect with *na*, as it does when it serves as a matrix predicate (*naroón*, 'be there'). Also note that, in general, a predicate that selects a small clause does not impose a restriction on the particular lexical item that may occur as the small clause predicate—yet, this is exactly what the analysis would have to say since no other predicate besides *roón* could occur in the predicate position of the small clause (cf. Existential sentences in Irish, as discussed by McCloskey 2006).

- b. Mayroó-ng bata-ng umiiyak.  
 exist.there-L child-L(Rel) Agr.Asp.cry  
 ‘There is a child (who is) crying.’
- c. Maryroó-ng lalaki-ng maysakit.  
 exist.there-L man-L(Rel) sick  
 ‘There is a man (who is) sick.’

Under the Small Clause hypothesis, a straightforward analysis of these constructions would take the constituent that occurs to the right of the pivot (and following the linker) as the predicate of the Small Clause. Accordingly, the structure of a sentence like (20b), for instance, would be parsed as shown in (21).



Two interrelated points immediately arise. First, if the structure in (21) is the correct parse for sentences like those in (20), a question arises relating to the content of the predicate position of the Small Clause in simple existential sentences—e.g., as in (15) above (recall that locative phrase is not a predicate). In the structure for such sentences, the Small Clause predicate would presumably be null. Second, the string consisting of the pivot, the linker, and the remaining material in sentences like (20) is potentially ambiguous with a complex DP containing a relative clause. Observe, for instance, that simple relative clauses in Tagalog, as illustrated in (22), consist of the same basic string of elements as the bracketed string in the examples in (20).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Some relative clauses—in particular, non-subject relative clauses—have a more complex structure involving the [+wh] complementizer *kung* followed by an overt Wh-operator.

- (i) Pumunta ako [sa tindahan [*kung saan* n-agtatrabaho si Maria *t*].  
 Agr.Asp.go I(s) Loc store L(Rel) where Agr.Asp-work s Maria  
 ‘I went to the store where Maria works.’

Relative clauses of this type are not ambiguous with any parse other than a relative clause, a point that will be significant in Section 4.3.2.

- (22) a. *Minamahal*      *ni Juan* [*ang bata*' -*ng*      [*Op in-iligtas*  
Agr.Asp.love    *ns Juan*   *s*   *child* -L(Rel)      Agr.Asp-rescue  
*niya t*]].  
he(ns)  
'Juan loves the child who he rescued.'
- b. *Maysakit* [*ang bata*'-*ng*      [*Op umiiyak t*]].  
sick      *s*   *child* -L(Rel)      Agr.Asp.cry  
'The child who is crying is sick.'

Given these two points, it should now be apparent that complex existentials, under the Small Clause analysis, may be ambiguous between the parse in (21) and the one shown below in (23), in which the pivot is a complex DP containing a relative clause and the Small Clause predicate is null.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Paul (2000) argues that both parses are attested in Malagasy (an Austronesian language that shares many typological characteristics with Tagalog and other Philippine languages). Her main evidence is based on the observation that existential sentences in Malagasy appear to alternate between an impersonal construction and an impersonal construction, as shown in (i)-(ii):

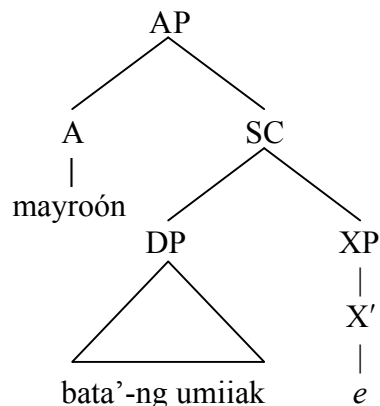
- (i) *Misy* [<sub>SC</sub> *zaza*   *mitomany*].  
exist    *child*   *cry*  
'There are some children crying.'
- (ii) *Misy* [<sub>SC</sub> *t*   *mitomany*] *ny*   *zaza*.  
exist      *cry*                  *the child*  
'Some of the children are crying.'

The point of interest here is that, while (i) is ambiguous between a parse as a relative clause or a small clause where the pivot is a relative clause and the small clause predicate is null, as schematized in (iii), the example in (ii) is not. (Note, Malagasy, unlike Tagalog, does not require an overt complementizer (or "linker") to separate the head NP and its relative clause modifier.)

- (iii) *Misy* [<sub>SC</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> *zaza*   *mitomany*] [<sub>Pred</sub> *e*]]  
exist                  *child*   *cry*

As Malagasy evidently does not have head final relative clauses (in contrast to Tagalog), (ii) could not be parsed as such. This means that *mitomany* in (ii) must be an independent predicate—thus, plausibly the predicate of a small clause complement selected by the existential verb *misy*. (Paul does not, however, discuss the possibility that *mitomany* is an adjunct adjoined to the VP headed by *misy*.)

(23)



The remaining discussion in this section will focus on two types of evidence against the Small Clause analysis in general. First, I will argue that there are some complex existential sentences that are not consistent with the structure in (21), but which can only be analyzed along the lines of (23). Demonstrating that some complex existential sentences are not amenable to the analysis in (21) does not rule out the possibility that other complex existential sentences could conceivably be analyzed according to the structure (21). I will present evidence in Section 4.3, however, which will argue that such a parse is never attested.

### 4.3 The Material to the Right of the Pivot Is a Relative Clause

**4.3.1 *XP is a Complement.*** There are certain complex existential sentences where the material that occurs to the right of the head noun of the pivot does not contain an open argument position. Consider (24). In this example, what appears to the right of the head noun of the pivot is clearly a complement of the noun.

- (24) Subali't may ila-ng [NP pagkakataon [CP na ang mga abnormal na  
 however exist some-L chance L(Comp) s Pl. abnormal L  
 selula ay kailanga-ng gamut-in]].  
 cell Inv. must -Comp Asp.treat-Agr  
 'However, there is some chance that the abnormal cells must be treated.' (GP 1)

Analyzing the material following the linker (glossed L(Comp)) as the predicate of a Small Clause and the nominal phrase preceding it as its subject is clearly not a viable possibility here. The reason, simply put, is that the material following the linker is not a predicate (it contains no open argument position), and therefore, could not have been merged with the nominal phrase in the manner of a Subject+Predicate relation. Thus, the only possible parse for this sentence, under the Small Clause hypothesis, would be to treat the entire bracketed string above as a complex NP (contained in a larger DP structure) which serves as the subject of a null Small Clause predicate—i.e., along the lines of (23).

**4.3.2 *Non-Subject Relative Clauses.*** In complex existential sentences like those in (20) above, the pivot corresponds to the argument that would function as the grammatical subject of a matrix clause containing the same predicate. Since this seems to be a

canonical, if not definitional, property of Small Clauses in general, a parse of (20) in which the material to the right of the pivot is a Small Clause predicate is plausible.

In all languages where Small Clauses are attested, for instance, none (as far as I am aware) have Small Clauses where the XP that serves as the subject of the Small Clause is any type of imaginable XP other than a type that would function as the subject of the same predicate in a matrix clause. Thus, one does not find Small Clauses of the hypothetical (and ungrammatical) sort in (25) below, in which the Small Clause predicate contains a subject (the “logical subject”) and the “subject” of the Small Clause is an argument/adverb construed with the Small Clause predicate.

- (25) a. \*The warning on the package made [on the table [Anne set it down]].  
 b. \*We saw [today [the zoo keeper arriving]].

Plausibly, Small Clauses like this are ruled out because the constituent that serves as the Small Clause’s predicate contains a subject (*Anne* in (25a), *the zoo keeper* in (25b)), but a true Small Clause predicate is “too small” to contain a subject. It can reasonably be hypothesized, for instance, that since a true Small Clause predicate, being necessarily smaller than TP (perhaps containing only a bare predicate), does not include a projection of T(ense), there is no way for a subject to be licensed—e.g., Case licensed. From this perspective, consider now the complex existential sentence in (26). The main point of interest here is that the material to the right of the pivot contains a subject (*ako* ‘I’).

- (26) Mayroó-ng mga araw na [na-lulungkot ako].  
 exist.there-L Pl. day L(Rel) Agr.Asp-be.sad I(s)  
 ‘There are days that I am sad.’

Since the bracketed material following the pivot contains a subject, it follows that it must, at least, be as large as TP (see Section 2). This makes an analysis of the material following the pivot as a Small Clause predicate rather implausible. A more plausible analysis of (26) is one in which the material to the right of the pivot is merged with the pivot as a non-subject relative clause modifier, as schematized in (27). Note that, if we continue to suppose that the existential predicate selects a Small Clause complement, then the predicate position of the Small Clause will be null (represented in (27) as *e*). Crucially, since the relative clause contains a full projection of TP, the presence of an overt subject is unremarkable.

- (27) Mayroó-ng [SC [DP mga araw na [CP Op [TP na-lulungkot ako *t*]]] *e*]  
 exist.there-L Pl. day L(Rel) Agr.Asp-be.sad I(s)

More striking examples of this sort of complex existential are given in (28). In these examples, what follows the pivot is unambiguously merged with the pivot as a non-subject relative clause modifier, due to the presence of the Complementizer *kung* followed by an overt Wh-operator corresponding to relativized adverbial. Assuming the overt Wh-operator occupies a position that dominates at least a full projection of the

clause—TP—it follows that the constituent containing this operator is “too big” to be the predicate of a Small Clause.

- (28) a. Mayroó-ng [mga support groups sa Melbourne [*kung saan*  
exist.there-L Pl. support groups Loc Melbourne Comp where  
nagsa-sama-sama ang mga tao -ng may-sakit na kanser *t*]].  
Agr.Asp-be.together s Pl. people-Comp sick L kanser  
‘There are support groups in Melbourne where sick people with cancer  
join together.’ (GP2)
- b. Mayroó-ng [ila-ng mga dahilan [*kung bakit* atrasado  
exist.there-L a.few-L Pl. reason Comp why late  
ang mga bayad *t*]].  
s Pl. payment  
‘There are a few reasons why the payments are late.’ (GP 1)

In short, the only plausible analysis of these examples is one in which the inner-bracketed string is merged as a relative clause modifier of the pivot.

4.3.3 *Fronted Material*. There is a third type of complex existential for which the Small Clause structure in (21) is an unlikely analysis. Consider the examples (29)-(30). Observe that, in both of these examples, the constituent following the (post-pivot) linker is preceded by a fronted constituent (a subject in (29), a time adverbial in (30)).

- (29) Mayroó-ng isa-ng lalaki na may-sakit na [[*ang pangalan*] ay  
exist.there-L a-L man L sick L(Rel) s name Inv  
Lazaro].  
Lazaro  
‘There was a sick man whose name was Lazaro.’ (TB)
- (30) ...Mayroó-ng mga ospital na [[*sa umaga lamang*]  
exist.there-L Pl hospital L(Rel) Loc morning only  
n-agbubukas o tumatanggap ng pasyente].  
Agr.Asp.open or Agr.Asp.able.to.recieve ns patient  
‘There are hospitals that are open or able to receive a patient  
only in the morning.’ (GP 3)

Consider first (29). Here, the material occurring to the right of the pivot contains a constituent that has been fronted. Following this fronted constituent is the so-called “inversion marker” *ay*, which regularly follows constituents (typically, subjects or adjuncts) that have been fronted to a clause initial position (see, e.g, Schachter and Otnes 1972:485; Kroeger 1993:57-69, 123-125). The examples in (31) are representative.



- (31) a. Ang mga pangyayari ay lalo-ng n-ag-pa-galit sa kanya.  
           s Pl happening Inv more-L Agr.Asp-Cause-angry Obl him  
           ‘What happened made him more angry.’ (LE 500)
- b. Dito ay pumupunta siya nang madalas.  
           here Inv Agr.Asp.come he(s) L(Adv) often  
           ‘He comes here often.’

Kroeger (1993) argues, on the basis of the positioning of second position pronouns, that the fronted constituent appearing before the inversion marker in sentences like (31) must be above the clausal boundary—namely, TP. Additional evidence that this position is at least higher than the predicate phrase (e.g., vP) is based on the relative positioning of the fronted constituent with respect to sentential negation. Sentence negation in Tagalog dominates the predicate—suggesting that the lowest possible location for negation is the head of the clause—namely, in T(ense).<sup>9</sup> Relevantly, “*ay*-inversion” never occurs below negation, as the minimal pair in (32) show.

- (32) a. Si Juan ay hindi’ pumupunta dito.  
           s Juan Inv not Agr.Asp.come here  
           ‘Juan is not (will not be) coming here.’
- b. \*Hindi’ si Juan ay pumupunta dito.  
           not s Juan Inv Agr.Asp.come here  
           (Juan is not coming (will not be) coming here.)

With this observation in hand, let us return to the example in (29). Crucially, if a fronted constituent preceding an the inversion marker is higher than TP, then it follows that the constituent occurring to the right of the linker in (29) must be at least as large as TP. If this is correct, then it follows that (29) cannot be analyzed as having a structure like (21), where the constituent following the linker functions as the Small Clause predicate. The reason for this concerns the general implausibility that a Small Clause predicate could be larger than (or even as large as) a full TP.

The same argument can be made on the basis of example (30), which involves a fronted adjunct preceding the string that occurs to the right of the pivot. Although Kroeger (1993:128-130) argues on the basis of second position pronouns that fronted adjuncts are lower in the clause than constituents that have been fronted in the “*ay*-inversion” sentences, he provides the following paradigm showing that a fronted adjunct occupies a position that is higher than sentential negation. Observe that if negation precedes the fronted adjunct, it is interpreted as constituent negation rather than sentence negation.

<sup>9</sup> The question of the exact location of negation, in particular whether it is located in T(ense) or higher, depends on a related question of whether or not the main predicate raises to T(ense). I leave this question open for now, but see Sabbagh (2005, Chapter 2) for discussion.

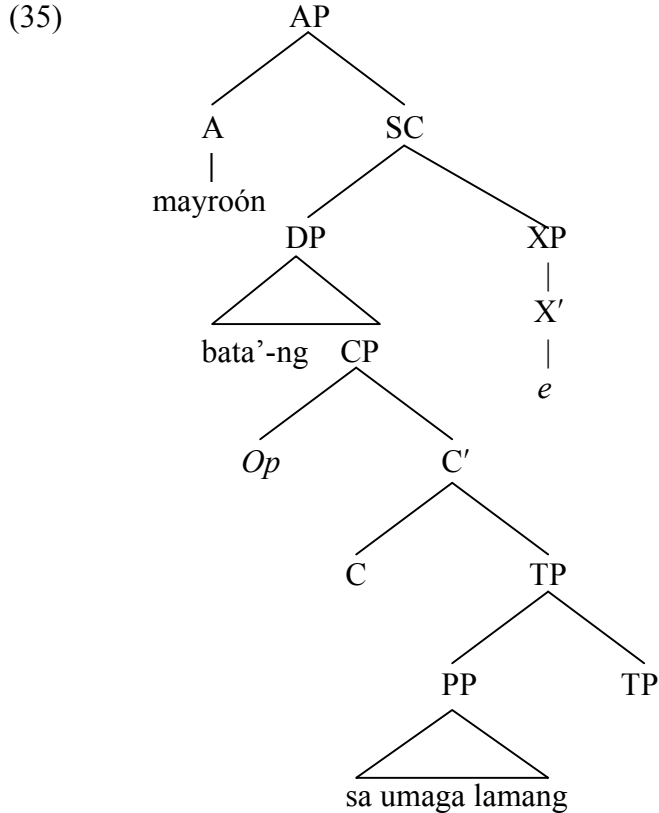
- (33) a. [*Sa opisina*] siya hindi' kinakausap ng kahit ninuman.  
 Loc office he(s) not Agr.Asp.talk ns even anyone  
 'At the office no one talks to him.'
- b. Hindi' [*sa opisina*] siya kinakausap ng kahit ninuman.  
 not Loc office he(s) Agr.Asp.talk ns even anyone  
 'Its not at the office that no one talks to him.'  
 (not, \*At the office no one talks to him.)

Significantly, then, a fronted adjunct appears to target a position that dominates both the verb and sentence negation, which appears higher than the verb. This position, must—at the very least—be adjoined to TP. We can conclude, therefore, that in the complex existential sentence in (30), the presence of the fronted adjunct entails that the constituent occurring to the right of the pivot is at least a full clause (i.e., a projection of TP), and—therefore—not small enough to be the predicate of a Small Clause.

The examples in (29) and (30) are, on the other hand, compatible with an analysis in which the material occurring to the right of the pivot is merged with the pivot as a relative clause modifier. Observe, for instance, that both “*ay*-inversion” and adjunct fronting are possible in relative clauses, as the examples in (34) illustrate.

- (34) a. *Pumunta* ako [*sa tindaha-ng* [*si Maria ay n-agtatrabaho*]].  
 Agr.Asp.go I(s) Loc store-L(Rel) s Maria Inv. Agr.Asp.work  
 'I went to the store that Maria works at.'
- b. *Minamahal* ni Maria [*ang lalaki-ng* [*dito pumupunta*  
 Agr.Asp.love ns Maria s man-L(Rel) here Agr.Asp.come  
*nang madalas*]].  
 L(Adv) often  
 'Maria loves the man who comes here often.'

With respect to the Small Clause analysis, then, the only plausible structure for an example like (30) is the one given in (35), in which the material following the linker is merged with the pivot as a relative clause modifier, and the predicate of the Small Clause is null.



4.3.4 *Existentials With a Null Pivot.* In complex existential sentences, the pivot may be null altogether. When this occurs, the content of the pivot is semantically underspecified but—I assume—syntactically projected (corresponding semantically to ‘one, thing’). Consider the examples in (36).

- (36) a. Mayroon pa ri -ng [mga [<sub>NP</sub> *e*] [*kumukontra* sa mga  
 exist.there still also-L Pl. Agr.Asp.oppose Obl. Pl.  
*sinabi* ni Bush]].  
 agr.perf.say ns Bush  
 ‘There are still also some who oppose the things Bush said.’
- b. Mayroo-ng [[<sub>NP</sub> *e*] [*dumadating*]].  
 exist.there-L Agr.Asp.come  
 ‘There is someone (who is) coming.’

The type of empty category observed with respect to these examples is apparently attested in only one other environment—namely, in the head position of a headless relative clause. Consider (37).

- (37) Isa-ng lalaki [ang [<sub>NP</sub> *e*] [namatay sa salpukan ng dalawa-ng  
 a-L man s Agr.Asp.die Obl. crash of two-L  
 sasakyan]].  
 vehicle  
 ‘It was a man who died in the crash of the two vehicles.’  
 (Lit. The one who died in the crash of the two vehicles was a man.) (E 1166)

If the material to the right of the pivot in the examples in (36) (represented by the empty category *e*) is merged with the pivot as a relative clause modifier, then these examples require no further explication. On the other hand, if the null pivot is the subject of a Small Clause predicate instantiated by the material occurring to its right, then some stipulation needs to be made in order to explain why it is possible for an argument in this environment, but generally not others, to be underspecified. Concretely, Tagalog allows for a DP in an argument position to be realized as null, but only under the condition that their content is fully recoverable from a salient antecedent. Such null arguments are therefore typically definite and therefore of a very different sort than the null category in examples (36)-(37).

I conclude, therefore, that the null category in the examples in (33) is the null head of a head-less relative clause. This means, of course, that the material occurring to the right of the null head is a relative clause modifier, not a Small Clause predicate.

#### 4.4 The Material to the Right of the Pivot is *Always* a Relative Clause

We have argued thus far that there are some complex existentials for which an analysis that treats the material occurring to the right of the pivot as the predicate of a Small Clause is implausible. Instead, these examples seem amenable only to an analysis in which the material following the pivot is merged with the pivot as a relative clause modifier, while the predicate of the Small Clause is null (see the structure in (23)).

There are, however, some complex existentials that might still be analyzed along the lines of the structure in (21), where the material that occurs after the pivot is the predicate of a Small Clause. Concretely, in examples like (38) below (repeated from above), the pivot is overt, the constituent occurring to its right does not contain its own subject, and there is no fronted constituent to suggest that it is larger than a simple bare predicate (e.g., a simple vP).

- (38) Mayroón-ng bata-ng umiiyak.  
 exist.there-L child-L(Rel) Agr.Asp.cry  
 ‘There is a child (who is) crying.’

Still, the material following the pivot is also ambiguous with a parse as a relative clause modifying the pivot. Given this problem of potential structural ambiguity, let us now ask whether there is any possibility for disambiguation. The answer is yes. Concretely, the two structures we are now considering make different predictions regarding the islandhood of the constituent occurring to the right of pivot. If this constituent is unambiguously a relative clause modifier merged with the pivot, then we generally expect to find certain syntactic dependencies (e.g., extraction) to be systematically blocked due to the islandhood of the relative clause. On the other hand, if

the material following the pivot can be parsed as the predicate of a Small Clause, then we might expect such island effects to be obviated. Below, I consider two types of dependencies—extraction and displacement of second position pronouns. With respect to both of these dependencies, we shall see the constituent occurring to the right of the pivot is an island. The conclusion, therefore, is that this constituent is never parsed as the predicate of a Small Clause, but always as relative clause modifier of the pivot.

4.4.1 *Extraction*. Extraction of an adverb is possible out of simple matrix clauses ((39)), as well as from embedded non-finite clauses ((40a)), as well as from embedded finite clauses ((40b)).

- (39) *Saan ka kumain t?*  
 where you(s) Agr.Asp.eat  
 ‘Where did you eat?’
- (40) a. *Saan mo gusto [-ng kumain t]?*  
 where you(ns) want -L(Comp) Agr.Inf.eat  
 ‘Where do you want to eat?’
- b. *Saan sinabi ni Pedro [-ng bumili siya ng laruan t]?*  
 where Agr.Asp.say ns Pedro -L(Comp) Agr.Asp.buy he(s)  
 ns toy  
 ‘Where did Pedro say that he bought the toy?’

Unsurprisingly, extraction of an adverb out of a relative clause is impossible, as (41) demonstrates.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> I use extraction of an adverb rather than of an argument (subject or object) to illustrate island effects in order to avoid interference relating to the “Subject-only” restriction on extraction. Concretely, An extracted element must usually correspond to the subject of the clause (=the argument that agrees with the predicate, and which would be marked *ang/si* in non-extraction environments). Extraction of a direct object, for instance, is impossible, unless the direct object has been promoted to subject. The paradigm in (i)-(iii), from Kroeger (1993:211), illustrates:

- (i) *Sino ang n-agnakaw ng kotse mo?* (extracted agent/subject)  
 who s Agr.Asp-steal ns car you(ns)  
 ‘Who stole you car?’
- (ii) \**Ano ang n-agnakaw ang katulong mo?* (extracted theme/non-subject)  
 what s Agr.Asp-steal s maid you(ns)  
 (What did your maid steal?)
- (iii) *Ano ang ninakaw ng katulong mo?* (extracted theme/subject)  
 what s Agr.Asp.steal ns maid you(ns)  
 ‘What did your maid steal?’

- (41) \**Saan* minamahal ni Juan [ang bata' [-ng iniligtas  
 where Agr.Asp.love ns Juan s child -L(Rel) Agr.Asp.rescue  
 niya *t*]]?  
 he(ns)  
 (Where does Juan love the child who he rescued?)

Given this observation, it is very significant that the material to the right of the pivot in a complex existential appears to be an island for extraction of an adverb. Consider (42).

- (42) a. \**Saan* mayroó-ng [bata [-ng iniligtas ni Juan *t*]]?  
 where exist.there-L child -L(Rel) Agr.Asp.rescue ns Juan  
 (Ok, as 'Where is there *t* a child who Juan rescued?'; bad if asking about the  
 location of the rescuing.)  
 b. \**Bakit* mayroó-ng [bata [-ng iniligtas ni Juan *t*]]?  
 why exist.there-L child -L(Rel) Agr.Asp.rescue ns Juan  
 (Why is there a child who Juan rescued *t* ?)

The facts in (42) follow straightforwardly if the material following the pivot in complex existential sentences is unambiguously a relative clause modifier merged with the pivot. Importantly, the ungrammaticality of the examples in (42) also seem to show that there is no parse for a complex existential sentence in which the material following the pivot is the predicate of a Small Clause. In other words, if there were such a parse, then it should be possible to obviate the islandhood of the constituent occurring to the right of the pivot, and the example in (41) should be grammatical on par with the examples in (39)-(40).

4.4.2 *P2 Pronouns*. Subject and non-subject pronouns in Tagalog must typically appear in second position of the immediate clause in which they originate (Schachter and Otnes 1972; Sityar 1988; Kroeger 1993). One apparent exception to this generalization involves restructuring contexts. Verbs such as *gusto* ('want') and *kaya* ('able') and perhaps many others allow optional restructuring of their embedded clause complement (Schachter and Otnes 1972:266, Kroeger 1993:167-207; Mercado 2001). One indication of restructuring is that the (non-subject) external argument of the restructuring predicate may appear within the embedded clause. Significant for us, a pronominal argument that is selected within the embedded clauses may (and, for some speakers at least, must) appear in second position of the (matrix) restructuring predicate when restructuring occurs.

(43) *Unrestructured Clause*

- a. Hindi' kaya ni Predo [-ng utus-an siya].  
 not able ns Pedro Comp Asp.order-Agr she(s)  
 'Pedro can't order her around.'

---

Oblique arguments and adverbs, however, are the exception of this restriction. Thus, we can be reasonably sure that the island facts discussed in the main text are not related to the "Subject-only" restriction.

*Restructured Clause*

- b. Hindi' *siya* kaya [-ng        utusa-an        ni Pedro \_\_\_\_ ].  
       not    she(s) able    Comp    Asp.order-Agr    ns Pedro  
       'Pedro can't order her around.'

According to Kroeger (1993), the reason why restructuring makes it is possible for a pronoun in an embedded clause to appears adjacent to the restructuring predicate is that the putative embedded clause in a restructuring environment is not—in fact—a full clause, but rather something more minimal. For Kroeger, this more minimal structure is “S” a clause-like constituent that contrasts with full clauses which are projected from I(nfl). Since the embedded clauses is not a full clause, it is the matrix clause projected from the restructuring predicate that constitutes the immediate clause in which the second position pronoun is contained, and thus, the minimal clause in which the pronoun must appear in second position. Suppose this analysis to be basically correct (though, cf. Mercado 2001 for an alternative proposal). Now, consider the structure of complex existentials that we are interested in, in which the complement of the existential verb is a Small Clause and the material to the right of the pivot is a Small Clause predicate. Since a Small Clause presumably does not introduce a clausal boundary, we predict that a pronoun that originates within the material to the right of the pivot (i.e., contained within the Small Clauses' predicate) should be able to surface to the immediate right of the existential verb. This is, however, impossible, as the minimal contrast in (44) below demonstrates. In (44a), the pronoun remains within the constituent following the pivot, while in (44b), the pronoun surfaces to the immediate right of the existential predicate. In the later case, the result is ungrammatical.<sup>11</sup>

- (44) a. Mayroo-ng [lalaki-ng maysakit [na        bibisitah-in        *niya* ]].  
       exist.there-L    man-L    sick        L(Rel) Asp.visit-Agr    he(ns)  
       'There is a sick man who he visits.'
- b. \*Mayroon    *niya*-ng [lalaki-ng maysakit [na        bibisitah-in \_\_\_\_ ]].  
       exist.there    he(ns)    man-L    sick        L(Rel)    Asp.visit-Agr  
       (There is a sick man who he visits.)

The fact that the pronoun originating within the constituent that occurs to the right of the pivot cannot surface to the right of the existential predicate follows straightforwardly if this constituent is unambiguously a relative clause modifying the pivot. In particular, as one might expect by now, a pronoun that originates within an unambiguous relative clause is systematically incapable of moving out of the relative

<sup>11</sup> Examples (44b) is grammatical if the pronoun appears in the subject case (as *siya* 'he(s)' rather than *niya* 'he(ns)'). In this case, however, the pronoun is interpreted as a possessor (broadly construed), so that the sentence means something more like “He has a sick child (e.g., his son) who he visits.” In this instance, then, the pronoun is an argument (e.g., the external argument, see footnote 2) of the existential predicate and not an argument of the predicate occurring to the right of the pivot.

clause. A minimal pair that demonstrates this fact is given in (45). (Note that (45b) is ungrammatical whether or not the pronoun is coreferential with the subject.)

- (45) a. *Humalik* si Juan [ng babae [-ng iniligtas *niya*]].  
 Agr.Asp.kiss s Juan ns woman -L(Rel) Agr.Asp.rescue he(ns)  
 ‘Juan kissed a woman who he rescued.’
- b. \**Humalik* *niya* si Juan [ng babae [-ng iniligtas \_\_]].  
 Agr.Asp.kiss he(ns) s Juan ns woman -L(Rel) Agr.Asp.rescue  
 (Juan<sub>i</sub> kissed a woman who he<sub>ij</sub> rescued.)

#### 4.5 A Final Observation: Tense-Aspect

We can round out the arguments given thus far with one final observation regarding complex existentials. In all of the examples of complex existential sentences that we have considered up to this point, the verbal predicate that occurs to the right of the pivot is inflected for tense-aspect. In fact, this verbal predicate may inflect for all of the relevant aspects that Tagalog allows for (Perfective, Imperfective, Contemplative) as shown in (46).

- (46) a. *Mayroo-ng* mga bata na hindi’ *n-agaaral*.  
 exist.there-L Pl. child L(Rel) not Agr.Imperf.study  
 ‘There are children who are not studying.’
- b. *Mayroo-ng* mga bata na hindi’ *n-agaral*.  
 exist.there-L Pl. child L(Rel) not Agr.Perf.study  
 ‘There are children who have not studied’
- c. *Mayroo-ng* mga bata na hindi’ *m-agaaral*.  
 exist.there-L Pl. child L(Rel) not Agr.Cont.study  
 ‘There are children who are not going to study.’

Very significantly, the verbal predicate *must* inflect for tense-aspect. It is not possible for the verbal predicate to appear in the non-finite (infinitive) form, as the ungrammaticality of (47) demonstrates.

- (47) \**Mayroo-ng* mga bata na hindi’ *m-agaral*.  
 exist.there-L Pl. child L(Rel) not Agr.Inf.study  
 ‘There are children who are not studying.’

These observations are readily accounted for if the material occurring to the right of the pivot is *always* merged with the pivot as a relative clause modifier. Since the relative clause contains a full clausal projection (TP), and because this clause, furthermore, is not selected by a higher predicate that would require the verb to be non-finite (e.g., an auxiliary verb or a control verb), the obligatory realization of tense-aspect follows from the same principle that requires (unselected) matrix verbal predicates to bear tense-aspect.

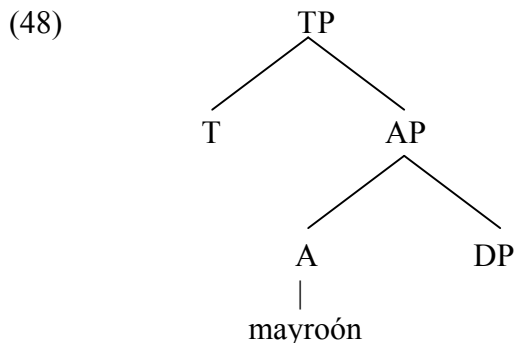


It is much less straightforward why (47) should be ungrammatical if there were a parse of this sentence in which the existential verb selects a Small Clause complement and the material occurring to the right of the pivot is the Small Clause predicate. Concretely, it is virtually a defining property of Small Clauses that the predicate that heads them lacks inflection for tense-aspect (their tense-aspect usually being dependent on the tense of the matrix predicate that selects the Small Clause—see, e.g., Gueron and Hoekstra 1989, 1994). Generally, this property of Small Clauses is attributed to the absence of an independent Tense-Aspect node within the Small Clause structure (Williams 1975; Stowell 1981, 1983; and others).

We can reasonably conclude, then, that there is no parse for complex existential sentences in which the material occurring to the right of the pivot is a Small Clause predicate—i.e., a constituent that functions as a predicate but which lacks its own projection own Tense-Aspect.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

We have argued so far as follows. Neither the locative phrase in simple existential sentences, nor the predicative material that occurs to the right of the pivot in complex existential sentences seem amenable to an analysis as the predicate of a Small Clause. The only way in which the Small Clause hypothesis could be maintained at this point, therefore, would be to suppose that the Small Clause's predicate position is always null. Because there is no positive support for this analysis, I conclude that it is the wrong approach. Rather, I take the evidence discussed above to support an analysis in which the complement of the existential verb is simply a DP. Updating the preliminary analysis from Section 3, we can thus conclude that existential sentences minimally conform to the structure in (48).



Admittedly, this structure is fairly unremarkable. In particular, it is the most basic structure that one would expect of a clause whose main predicate is an unaccusative predicate that selects a single DP argument as its argument.<sup>12</sup> Of course, this is not a

<sup>12</sup> It is sometimes claimed in the literature that there are no unaccusative adjectives (see, e.g., Baker 2003 and references therein). The analysis in (49) is obviously not consistent with this claim. On the other hand, the correctness of claim that there are no unaccusative adjectives is far from clear. Cinque (1990) argues, for instance, that Italian countenances

negative result, since it means that we so far have not needed to posit a distinctive existential syntax to represent existential sentences in Tagalog. On the other hand, there are still some details, which have heretofore been ignored, which we now need to take into account. First and foremost, we have not yet addressed the question, raised earlier in Section 3, of whether the existential predicate is syntactically complex. Second, there are morpho-syntactic peculiarities that we have ignored. These include, chiefly, the following three observations:

- Existential sentences are always impersonal. (Verbal and non-verbal existential sentences)  
The existential predicate never occurs in a personal configuration, in which the pivot is the subject of the clause. This is peculiar, given that the internal argument of other non-verbal unaccusative predicates in the language is *always* a subject (i.e., such predicates are never licensed in impersonal configurations).
- The pivot is unmarked for morphological case, suggesting that it has not been assigned abstract Case. (Non-verbal existential sentences only)  
Assuming that DP arguments require abstract Case to be licensed, how is the pivot licensed in the absence of Case?
- A “Linker” immediately precedes the pivot (Non-verbal existential sentences only)  
The linker that precedes the pivot is, evidently, the same linker that appears in NPs that co-occur with a modifier (an adjective or determiner). In existential sentences, however, there is no obvious modifier connected to the pivot.

As far as I am aware, no other clause type in Tagalog exhibit any of these three properties. The important question raised, then, is whether the simple analysis in (48) must be complicated in order to successfully account for these properties. In what follows, I will attempt to demonstrate that the answer to this question is no. In particular, I will attempt to show how the morpho-syntactic peculiarities described above are the result of the interaction between the syntax and the compositional semantics of the one element that is trivially specific to existential sentences—namely, the existential predicate. The next section, therefore, will focus on developing a more concrete syntactic and compositional semantic analysis of the existential predicate.

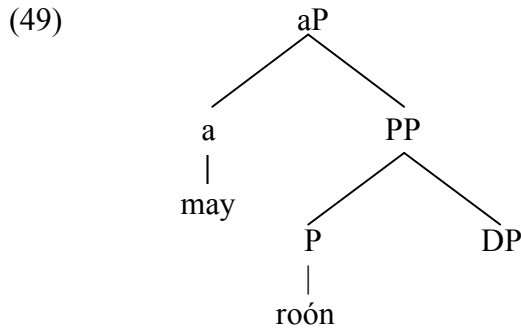
## 5 The Existential Predicate and the Definiteness Effect

In Section 2, it was pointed out that the existential predicate *mayroón* appears to be a complex word consisting of the elements *may* and *roón*. In this section, I propose that this is the right way to look at things. Concretely, I claim that *may* belongs to the closed-class set of functional items represented in the syntax by the functional head, *a* (the adjectival

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a larger class of unaccusative adjectives. Also, in Sabbagh (2005, 2006), I also argue that all adjectival passives in Tagalog are unaccusative.

analogue of Chomsky's 1995 functional category, *v*), and that this category takes as its complement a lexical projection headed by the predicate *roón*.<sup>13, 14</sup>



One of the main claims embodied in this analysis is that *roón* is a meaningful lexical item. In particular, since it selects an argument (the pivot), it presumably must be able to ascribe some meaningful property to that argument. Given its homophony with the distal pro-form locative *roón*, meaning ‘there’, this claim should be unproblematic.

Matters are a bit more complicated, however, due to the apparent fact that existential-*roón* does not have the exact meaning of the distal locative-*roón*. To see this, consider the example in (50) (repeated from our earlier discussion):

- (50) Mayroó-ng aksidente dito kahapon.  
 exist.there-L accident here yesterday  
 ‘There was an accident here yesterday.’

This simple existential sentence also contains the proximal locative pro-form meaning *dito* (‘here’). If existential-*roón* has the same meaning as locative-*roón* found in other contexts, we might expect a sentence like (50) to be semantically anomalous, due to the contradiction between the two locatives expressing conflicting locations. It seems, in other words, that existential-*roón* is simply an expletive, analogous to *there* in English existentials. If it is an expletive, however, then this would seem to undermine the idea

<sup>13</sup> For concreteness, I represent *roón* as a preposition. Nothing hinges on this particular analysis. One could also suggest that *roón* is initially uncategorized (i.e., a category neutral root in the sense of Marantz (1997) and Borer (2000), among others), and that it obtains its category status (as an adjective) by virtue of the “adjectivizing” head, *a*, which dominates it.

<sup>14</sup> I assume the same basic syntax for the verbal existential predicate, except that to account for the category difference with *mayroón*, I assume that *magka-roon* projects *vP*. In particular, *magka-* heads this *vP* and selects the *PP* projection consisting of *roon* and the pivot, as schematized in (i):

- (i) [<sub>vP</sub> [<sub>v</sub> *magka-* [<sub>PP</sub> *roon* DP] ] ]

See Section 5.2 for further elaboration.

that it could be a semantically contentful predicate which serves as the lexical base of the existential predicate, which selects the pivot as its internal argument.

The conclusion that existential-*roón* is an expletive is not inevitable. The apparent expletive behavior of existential-*roón*—in particular, the observation that it does seem to carry the same locative meaning as the distal locative-*roón*—may be the result of an independent factor relating to the presence of *may*. Concretely, there is one other use of *may* in Tagalog, which is illustrated in the examples in (51). This *may* appears before location denoting expressions, and has the semantic effect of conveying “approximate location” rather than the exact location (Schachter and Otnes 1972:256,451).

- (51) a. Nasa            may    Baguio ang gusali.  
           Pred.Loc   MAY   Baguio s    building  
           ‘The building is in the Baguio vicinity.’  
       b. Nakita            ko    sila    sa may    harap ng teatro.  
           Agr.Asp.see I(ns)   them(s) Loc MAY front ns theatre  
           ‘I saw them somewhere near (the vicinity of) the theatre.’

Although I am not confident at this point that a unified analysis of this use of *may* and the existential *may* is the right way to go, I believe that we can—at the very least—grant that there might be some overlap in use. If so, then the apparent expletive behavior of existential-*roón* might follow. In particular, we can assume that existential- *roón* is identical semantically to the distal locative-*roón*, except that in the environment of *may*, its actual “locative force” is lost in a way that parallels some of the loss of the locative force of the location denoting phrases in the examples in (51).

The advantage of taking this approach should be clear. In particular, by claiming that existential-*roón* and locative-*roón* are the same, we don’t need to posit multiple lexical entries for *roón* in the lexicon. According to this account, the different nuances of meaning between existential-*roón* and locative-*roón* derive not from a lexical ambiguity, but from different “flavors” of the light-predicate head (v, a) that the root merges with (for a more detailed development of this line of thought, see, in particular, Arad 2003).

## 5.1 The Definiteness Effect

Like existential constructions in many other languages, the pivot of a Tagalog existential sentence exhibits a definiteness effect. In all of the examples cited so far, the pivot has either been preceded by an indefinite determiner, or not preceded by a determiner at all. When unmarked for a determiner, the pivot is always interpreted as a non-specific indefinite.

Crucially, a DP that is headed by a strong quantifier cannot serve as the pivot of an existential sentence.

- (52) a. \*May(roó-ng) lahat ng manok sa bahay.  
           exist.there-L all of chicken Loc house  
           (There are all of the chickens in the house.)
- b. \*May(roó-ng) bawa't isa-ng babae sa bahay.  
           exist.there-L every one-L woman Loc house  
           (There is each/every woman in the house.)
- c. \*May(roó-ng) karamihan ng mga tao sa bahay.  
           exist.there-L most of Pl. person Loc house  
           (There were most of the people at the house.)

A gap of an extracted indefinite Wh-phrase such as *ano*, 'what') may occur in the pivot position, as shown in (53). By contrast, a gap of a specific Wh-phrase such as *sino* ('who'), as demonstrated by (54), cannot.

- (53) a. [*Ano* ang [*Op* mayroón *t*]] sa bahay ni Juan?  
           what s exist.there Loc house ns Juan  
           'What is there in Juan's house?'
- b. Kung gusto mo lang malaman kung [*ano* ang [*Op* mayroón *t*]],  
           if want you just Agr.Inf.know Comp what s exist.there  
           m-agtanong lang.  
           Agr.Inf.ask just  
           'If you just want to know what there is, just ask.'
- (54) \*[*Sino* ang [*Op* mayroón *t*]] sa bahay?  
           who s exist.there Loc house  
           (Who is there in the house?)

The definiteness effect also seems to systematically excludes pronouns in pivot position:

- (55) \*Mayroón siya/niya sa bahay.  
           exist.there he(s)/he(ns) Loc house  
           'There was him in the house.'

One apparent exception to this side of the definiteness effect involves the pronoun *nito* 'this'. However, when this pronoun appears in the pivot position of the existential sentence, it is interpreted as an indefinite partitive (Schachter and Otnes 1972:275, 280).

- (56) Mayroón nito roon.  
           exist.there this there  
           'There some of this there.'

Indefinite partitives seem to be licit as the pivot of an existential sentence more generally, as the examples in (57) show.

- (57) a. Mayroó-ng ilan sa inyo na hindi' *sumusampalatya*.  
 exist.there-L some Obl. you L(Rel) not Agr.Asp.believe  
 'There are some of you who don't believe.' (TB)
- b. May ilan sa mga tao na may-sakit na kanser na  
 exist some Obl. Pl. person L sick L cancer L(Rel)  
 wala-ng lunas...  
 not.exist-L remedy  
 'There are some of the people who have cancer who don't have a remedy.'  
 (<http://www.cancervic.org.au/cancer1>)

This fact may be surprising, since partitive indefinites are typically excluded from occurring in existential sentences in other languages (cf. the English translation of (57b), which seems fairly ungrammatical). However, the issue of whether indefinite partitives are prohibited from occurring in existentials appears to be a fairly contentious descriptive problem in the literature (see McNally 1998:19, fn. 24). I leave the issue open for now, and assume for simplicity that indefinite partitives should not be excluded from existential sentences.

Finally, DPs headed by a demonstrative determiner and proper names are also generally excluded as pivots. At least in the former case, however, this effect can be overridden in "list contexts", as shown in (58).

- (58) At mayroon ito-ng yaya na Liway Perez ang pangalan.  
 and exist.there this-L nursemaid L(Rel) Liway Perez s name  
 'And there is this nursemaid whose name is Liway Perez.' (GP 7)

## 5.2 Approaches to the Definiteness Effect

I now consider two approaches to definiteness effects, which will form the basis for the compositional semantic analysis of the existential predicate that I will propose in the next sub-section. McNally (1998) proposes that the definiteness restriction follows from a selectional restriction imposed by the existential predicate on its argument. Concretely, she analyzes the existential predicate (*there be*, in English) as synonymous with the predicate *be instantiated*, a predicate that holds of expressions interpreted as properties. In more formal terms, McNally proposes that the existential predicate is a predicate of type  $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$ , in other words, a predicate whose primary argument (=the pivot) must have the denotation of a one-place property. The proposal, therefore, resembles Milsark's (1974) proposal, in which he analyzes the existential predicate as having a denotation equivalent to an existential quantifier:  $\lambda P \exists x [P(x)]$  (for related proposals, see Jenkins 1972; Blutner 1993; and Williams 1994; Musan 1996; and Van Geenhoven 1998).

Since the existential predicate requires its argument (=the pivot) to have the denotation of one-place property—i.e., a DP of type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ , it follows that DPs headed by strong quantifiers (semantically of type  $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$  and definite DPs (semantically of type  $\langle e \rangle$ ) will be precluded as arguments of the existential predicate. Putting aside the more complicated cases (e.g., definites in "list-contexts"), this is how McNally accounts for the definiteness effect.

In more recent work, Chung and Ladusaw (2004) (henceforth, CL) propose that the definiteness effect arises as a consequence of the mode of composition by which the existential predicate and its argument combine. In contrast to McNally, they propose that the existential predicate has the ordinary semantic type of a simple one-place predicate—i.e., type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ . They propose, however, that the existential predicate combines with its argument by means of the compositional operation which they term *Restrict*. Restrict is a non-saturating composition rule that allows the property denoting argument of a predicate (namely, an indefinite that is semantically of type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ ) to be interpreted as a restrictive modifier of the predicate. Restrict is taken generally to be a freely available option governing the composition of a predicate with its argument. However, CL claim that the existential predicate must obligatorily compose with its argument via Restrict.<sup>15</sup> Since Restrict can only target an argument that is interpreted as a property, the definiteness effect follows in much the same way as in McNally's proposal. That is, quantificational and definite DPs, which do not have the basic property type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ , will not be able to

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<sup>15</sup> As evidence for Restrict, Chung and Ladusaw discuss the distribution of two indefinites in Maori, *he* and *tetahi*. Indefinites headed by either *he* or *tetahi* are generally interchangeable in a variety of contexts, yet not interchangeable in others. Only the indefinite headed by *tetahi* may have wide scope in quantificational constructions, and only an indefinite headed by *he* can serve as the pivot of an existential sentences. CL conclude that the difference between these two indefinites relates to the mode of composition. Indefinites headed by *tetahi* are composed with the predicate that selects them by an operation Specify (corresponding to a Choice Function operation—see, e.g., Reinhart 1997). Indefinites headed by *he*, by contrast, are composed with their selecting predicate by Restrict.

The observation that *he* and *tetahi* indefinites are generally interchangeable suggests that Restrict must be an optional composition rule. On the other hand, the fact that only a *he* indefinite can appear in existential sentences suggests that it is required of at least one predicate (namely, the existential predicate) that it compose with its argument via Restrict. As far as I can tell, CL make no attempt to derive their claim that the existential predicate *must* combine with its argument via Restrict, in contrast to other predicates that may optionally combine with their argument via Restrict. Given that the existential predicate in Maori (which is actually null in affirmative existential sentences) does not seem to serve as the base of any other type of predicate (e.g., the predicate locative), this stipulation may be benign.

For reasons that will become clear in the main text, however, we do not want to stipulate that the predicate, *roón*, which selects the pivot as its argument, obligatorily composes with the pivot via Restrict. The analysis I will propose uses CL's operation Restrict to account for the definiteness effect in existential sentences, but derives the obligatory nature of applying this composition rule between *roón* and the pivot by combining CL's proposal with the proposal that *may*, which selects the phrase containing *roón* and the pivot, requires this phrase to be property denoting. At the present time, I do not know if it is desirable to extend this analysis to CL's data to derive the stipulation that the existential predicate in Maori obligatorily composes with its argument via Restrict.

compose with the existential predicate via Restrict, and will therefore be precluded as arguments of the existential predicate.

### 5.3 The Locus of the Definiteness Effect in Tagalog

Neither of the approaches to the definiteness effect outlined above seems able to handle the Tagalog facts on their own. The reason for this relates to the claim I made earlier—namely, that the existential predicate consists of a lexical projection headed by the element *roón*, which is both the root of the existential predicate as well as the root of other locative predicates (*naroón* ‘be there’, *pumaroón* ‘go there’). Significantly, these other predicates, which also consist of the root *roón*, do not impose a definiteness effect on their argument. The predicate locative *naroón* (‘be there’), for instance, unexceptionally allows its argument to be definite ((59a)), headed by a strong quantifier ((59b)); or the gap left by extraction of specific Wh-phrase ((59c)).

- (59) a. *Naroón sa Maynila si Juan.*  
       Pred.there Loc Manila s Juan.  
       ‘Juan is there in Manila.’
- b. *Naroón ang lahat.*  
       Pred.there s all  
       ‘Everyone is there.’
- c. *Sino [ang [Op naroón t sa bahay]]?*  
       who s Pred.there Loc house  
       ‘Who is there in the house?’

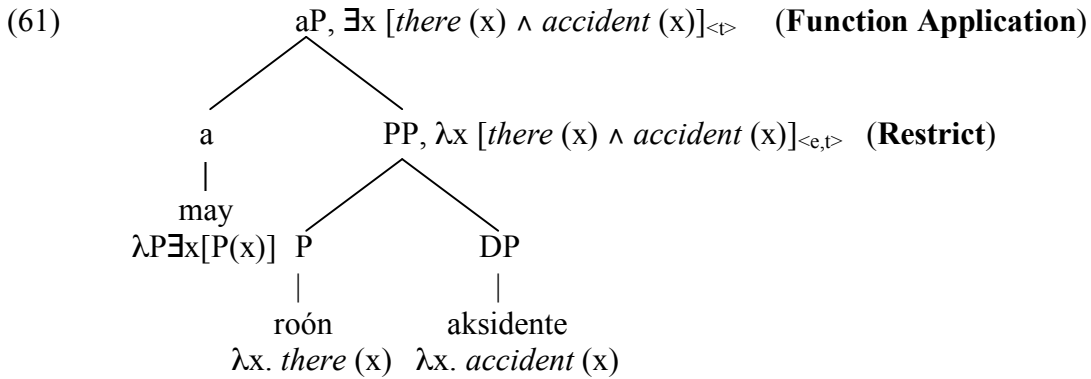
Under McNally’s proposal, the only way to handle these facts would be to posit two separate lexical entries for *roón*, one which has the meaning equivalent to an existential quantifier (or the predicate, *be instantiated*), the other which has the semantics of a one-place predicate. This, of course, does not allow us to maintain the claim that existential-*roón* and locative-*roón* are one and the same element. The same issue arises if we adopt Chung and Ladusaw’s proposal. To account for the contrast between existential-*roón* and locative-*roón*, we would have to posit a lexical ambiguity between the two. The difference between the two lexical entries would not be stated in terms of different semantic types (as under McNally’s approach), but rather in terms of the different modes of composition—namely, Restrict for existential-*roón*, Function Application for locative-*roón*.

I now want to suggest that can combine both McNally’s proposal and CL’s proposal to account for the distribution of the definiteness effect in Tagalog without positing any lexical ambiguity. Let us start with the assumption, then, that there is just one listing of *roón* in the lexicon, and that it has the semantic type of a one-place predicate—namely, a predicate of type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ . Consistent with CL’s proposal, let us furthermore assume that any predicate can, as a generally free option, combine with its argument via Restrict. What we need now is a way to “force” Restrict to apply in the context of the existential construction, without actually stipulating that it must do so as an idiosyncratic requirement of the predicate *roón*.



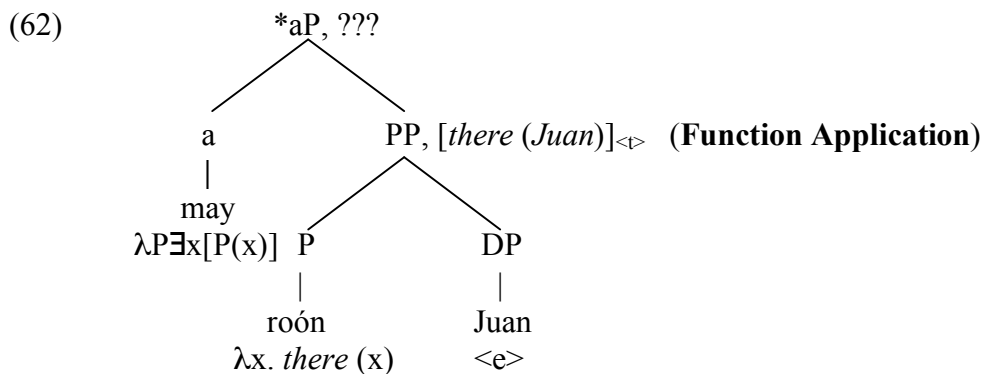
To this end, let us now reintroduce the hitherto ignored morpheme of the existential predicate, *may*. Suppose we take *may* to have the denotation of an existential quantifier ( $\lambda P \exists x [P(x)]$ ), along the lines proposed by McNally and Milsark for the English existential predicate *there be*.<sup>16</sup> Referring back to the structure in (48), recall that *may* is taken to be the head of an aP, which takes the lexical projection (PP) consisting of *roón* and its argument as its complement. Given the semantics of *may* just proposed, this lexical projection must, at the point where it combines with *may*, have the denotation of a property. This can be achieved if *roón* takes the option of composing with its argument via Restrict. To illustrate, consider the derivation of a simple existential sentence like (60), repeated from earlier.

- (60) Mayroó-ng aksidente dito kahapon.  
 exist.there-L accident here yesterday  
 ‘There was an accident here yesterday.’



Crucially, the analysis assumes that Restrict, as the mode of composition between *roón* and its complement, is optional. In particular, nothing forces the predicate *roón* to compose with its argument via Restrict at the level of the PP in (61). It would be possible, in other words, for *roón* to compose with a definite DP via Function application. If this occurs, however, the composition will ultimately crash at the point where the PP merges with *may*—since the denotation of the PP at this point will be saturated (semantically of type  $\langle t \rangle$ ), and will therefore not be the right semantic type (a property) to compose with *may*. The failed derivation is illustrated in (62).

<sup>16</sup> This analysis also dovetails nicely with Massam’s (2002) suggestion that the existential predicate in Niuan (*fai*) is syntactically both a verb and a determiner. Her claim for this analysis is based on the observation that incorporation with *fai* differs from incorporation with other predicates in that only in the former case does the incorporated NP introduce a discourse referent. Thus, she claims that *fai* acts like a determiner in that it “confers referentiality on its internal object...”, in the same way that a determiner confers referentiality of the NP it determiners.



On the other hand, the analysis is flexible enough to allow *roón* to combine with a definite in other contexts—namely, when it serves as the base of the locative predicate *naroón* (‘be there’). This is a desired result in so far as it allows us to account for the absence of a definiteness effect in examples like (59).

#### 5.4 Is the Definiteness Effect More General?

According to the analysis proposed above, the definiteness effect observed in existential sentences is ultimately a consequence of the denotation of *may*, which—I suggested—is that of an existential quantifier. No other predicates in the language are formed by combining *may* with the projection of a lexical root. All things being equal, then, we predict that the definiteness effect observed in existential sentences will be limited to existential sentences.

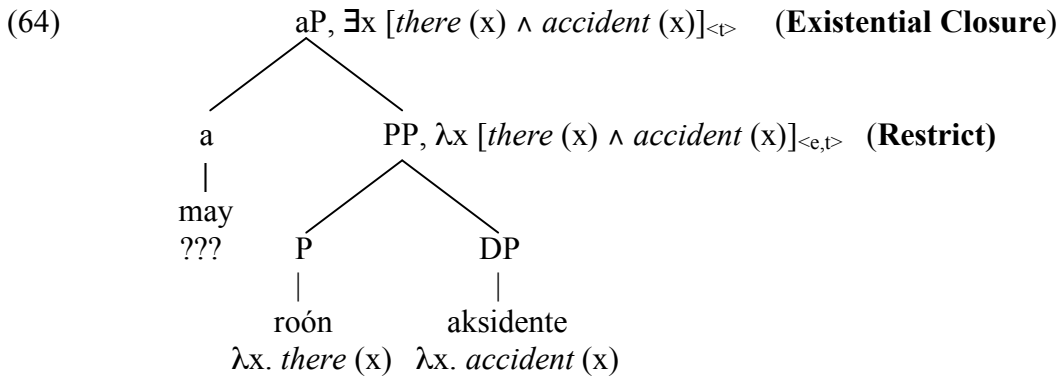
At this point, it is relevant to point out that, in general, direct objects of transitive verbs appear to be restricted in the same way as the pivot of an existential sentence. For instance, the direct object cannot be a pronoun ((63a)) or a proper name ((63b)). Evidently, the internal argument also cannot be universally quantified ((63c)).

- (63)
- a. \**Humawak niya si Maria.*  
Agr.Asp.hold him(ns) s Maria  
‘Maria held him.’
  - b. \**Humawak ni Juan si Maria.*  
Agr.Asp.hold ns Juan s Maria  
‘Maria held Juan.’
  - c. \**N-agbukas ng lahat ng mga kahon si Juan.*  
Agr.Asp.open ns all of Pl. box s Juan  
‘Juan opened all of the boxes.’

Based on this observation, one might suggest a generalization that accounts for the definiteness effect observed in (63) (henceforth, *DE-Object*) as well as the definiteness effect observed in existential sentences (henceforth, *DE-Pivot*). This generalization might be stated, rather simply, as follows: Internal arguments must be indefinite. Plainly, the formal analysis in which *DE-Pivot* follows from the particular semantics of *may* is not general enough to account for this generalization in a unified way. How might we formulate an analysis to capture the suggested generalization? To

answer this question, let us begin by considering a slight alternative way of deriving the meaning for existential sentences, as follows.

Suppose that instead of assigning *may* the meaning of an existential quantifier, we assume that it makes no relevant semantic contribution after all, and conjecture instead that an operation of default existential closure applies at the level of the maximal projection of the predicate (see, e.g., Diesing 1992). As long as the argument of *roón* (=the pivot) is indefinite, and if we continue to assume that *roón* composes with the pivot via Restrict, then the end result will be semantically equivalent to the result obtained under the analysis proposed above. Thus, compare the derivation in (61) above to the one shown immediately below.



Why, then, did we not take this approach to begin with, assuming existential closure to be a universally available mechanism?

Part of the reason has already been given. In particular, default existential closure will only apply if there is an unbound variable within the domain of existential closure. If *roón* combines with a definite DP rather than an indefinite, however, default existential closure will simply not apply. In other words, since the mechanism of default existential closure is independent of the lexical semantics of any given predicate, it cannot “force” a predicate (*roón*, in the case we are interested in) to combine with an indefinite. (Recall that we want to maintain that *roón* can take a definite DP as its argument, as in the case of locative-*roón*. Otherwise, we are forced to posit a lexical ambiguity between existential-*roón* and locative-*roón*.)

Suppose now that we modify the alternative account by claiming that existential closure at the level of the predicate phrase is obligatory in Tagalog, and not simply a default mechanism that applies only if the predicate phrase contains an indefinite. Significantly, if existential closure applies obligatorily at the predicate phrase level, then we might be able to account for DE-Object (observed with respect to the examples in (60)) as well as DE-Pivot in a unified manner. Concretely, if existential closure always applies at the level of the predicate phrase, then it follows that every predicate phrase must contain an at least one internal argument that is indefinite. Crucially, then, we correctly predict the sentences in (63) to be ungrammatical.

It is not long before we see that this proposal will not work. Putting aside unergative predicates and unaccusative predicate’s whose internal argument has advanced to subject, we can see the problem immediately by observing that each of the

sentences in (63) can be “transformed” into a grammatical sentence by promoting the internal argument to subject.

- (65) a. *Hinawak-an siya ni Maria.*  
 Asp.hold-Agr he(s) ns Maria  
 ‘Maria held him.’
- b. *Hinawak-an ni Maria si Juan.*  
 Asp.hold-Agr ns Maria s Juan  
 ‘Maria held Juan.’
- c. *Binuks-an ni Juan ang lahat ng mga kahapon.*  
 Asp.open-Agr ns Juan s all ns Pl. box  
 ‘Juan opened all of the boxes.’

Crucially, there is no predicate-internal indefinite in any of these sentences. Presumably, the raised object leaves behind a trace that will be interpreted as a variable, an expression of type  $\langle e \rangle$  rather than  $\langle e, t \rangle$ . Thus, while the proposal that obligatory existential closure at the level of the predicate phrase can account for DE-Object, as observed with respect to the examples (63), it also incorrectly predicts that the sentences in (65) will be ungrammatical.

We can further highlight the difference between DE-Object and DE-Pivot by considering the question of why existential sentences are always impersonal. First, suppose we make an additional modification to the obligatory existential closure hypothesis above by claiming that obligatory existential closure applies if and only if the predicate phrase contains an overt internal argument (e.g., a direct object). Given this modification, the examples in (65) are no longer predicted to be ungrammatical—on the assumption that the trace of a raised object does not count as an overt internal argument. Even with this modification, however, the proposal offers no explanation for why the internal argument of the existential predicate cannot be promoted to subject—i.e., why sentences like (66) are ungrammatical.

- (66) \**Mayroón dito kahapon ang aksidente.*  
 exist.there here yesterday s accident  
 (There was an/the accident here yesterday.)

By contrast, according to the analysis in which *may* is analyzed semantically as an existential quantifier, this fact follows as a consequence of the definiteness effect (namely, DE-Pivot). Concretely, the trace left behind when the pivot raises will be interpreted as variable, an expression of type  $\langle e \rangle$ . Since the trace is semantically of type  $\langle e \rangle$ , it will saturate the open argument of the predicate *roón* when the two are composed, resulting in an expression of type  $\langle t \rangle$ . The derivation will crash on the semantic side, however, since *may* requires the category it combines with to be of type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ .

The conclusion, therefore, is that DE-Object is fundamentally different from DE-Pivot.<sup>17</sup> Thus, analyzing DE-Pivot as the result of a lexical idiosyncrasy rather than something more general seems appropriate.

### 5.5 The Locus of Existential Force

Another consequences of the analysis presented above is that the existential force of existential sentences comes from the existential predicate itself—in particular, from the element *may*. According to the analysis, the predicate *roón* contributes to the overall meaning of the existential sentence by adding a contentful location predicate, but it does not contribute to the existential force of the sentence per se. One motivating factor behind this analysis was that it allowed us to avoid stipulating a lexical ambiguity between existential-*roón* and locative-*roón* (the locative predicate *naroón* ('be there'), for instance, does not introduce existential force). In this sub-section, I consider an additional piece of evidence that this analysis is on the right track.

The evidence comes from the verbal existential predicate *magkaroón* (introduced in Section 3). The verbal existential predicate differs from the non-verbal *mayroón* in that *may* is replaced by the prefix *magka-*, which inflects for aspect and seems to correlate with the inflection for case on the pivot. Putting these differences aside, I assume that *magka-* is the (verbal) counterpart of *may*—i.e., that it has the same meaning as *may* (as an existential quantifier). Also analogous to the syntactic analysis of *may*, I assume that *magka-* is the head of vP (i.e., the verbal analogue of aP).

There is, however, one important respect in which the verbal existential predicate and the non-verbal existential predicate differ. As we have seen in many of the examples cited so far, *may* often stands alone in the syntax without an overt *roón*. It is also true that *roón* need not be overt in verbal existential sentences. However, when *roón* is not overt in verbal existential sentences, this seems to have significant syntactic consequences relating to the size of the pivot. Concretely, when *magka-* does not co-occur with *roón*, the pivot cannot be a full case marked DP. Rather, it seems that the size of the pivot is reduced from DP (when *roón* is overt) to a simple NP. Consider the minimal contrast between the examples in (67).

- (67) a. Magkaka-roón ng gera sa Europe.  
           Asp.exist-there ns war Loc Europe  
           'There will be a war in Europe.'
- b. Magkaka-[gera] sa Europe.  
           Asp.exist-war Loc Europe  
           'There will be a war in Europe.'

<sup>17</sup> The conclusion reached here leaves open the account of DE-Object. One possibility would be to appeal to the kind of approach presented in Aissen (2001, 2003) to deal with markedness phenomenon relating to the alignment of DP type (definite/indefinite; animate/inanimate; etc.) and grammatical function (subject/object).

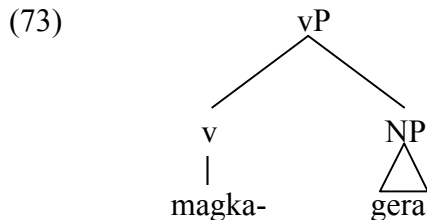
That the pivot is at least as big as NP is established by the observation that it may be modified by an adjective (as in (68)), that it may be coordinated (as in (69)), and that it may even consist of a noun followed by a complement (as in (70)).

- (68) Magkaka-[gera-ng malaki] sa Europe.  
 Asp.exist- war-L big Loc Europe  
 ‘There will be a big war in Europe.’
- (69) Nagka- [handaan at aksidente] sa bahay ni Juan.  
 Asp.exist-party and accident Loc house ns Juan  
 ‘There was a party and an accident at Juan’s house.’
- (70) Magkaka-[problema sa pera] kung hindi’ titigil  
 Asp.exist- problem Obl. money if not Agr.Asp.stop  
 sa paggasta.  
 Obl. spending  
 ‘There will be (you will have) a problem with money if you don’t stop spending (lit. with the spending).’

That the pivot is no larger than NP is established by the observation that it cannot contain an overt determiner, as the ungrammatical examples in (71) illustrate. The example in (72) also illustrates that the pivot may not even consist of the inflectional marker indicating plurality.

- (71) a. \*Magkaka-[isa-ng gera-ng malaki] sa Europe.  
 Asp.exist- a-L war-L big Loc Europe  
 (There will be a big war in Europe.)
- b. \*Nagka- [marami-ng handaan] sa bahay ni Juan.  
 Asp.exist- many-L party Loc house ns Juan  
 (There were many parties at Juan’s house.)
- (72) \*Nagka- [mga gera] sa Europe.  
 Asp.exist- Pl. war Loc Europe  
 ‘There were wars in Europe.’

What is the structure of these sentences? I propose that a sentence like (67b) has an impoverished structure in comparison to its counterpart in (67a). In particular, suppose that *roón* is not projected in (67b), and the complement of *v* (=magka-) is a simple NP, as illustrated in (73).



Note first that this structure is consistent with the semantic analysis of *may/magka-* as an existential quantifier. Concretely, since the NP denotes a property, it satisfies the selectional requirement that *magka-* requires a property denoting argument.

The fact that the pivot must be an NP and not a DP might plausibly follow from a general architectural condition on vP-structure that requires the complement of v to be a lexical rather than a functional category.<sup>18</sup> Thus, as a consequence of *roón* not being projected, the pivot is “reduced” from DP to NP. Supposing for the moment that this analysis is the correct one, the crucial observation to be made is that the sentences in (67) are synonymous, in as much as both sentences assert the non-emptiness of the set denoted by the pivot. This fact is consistent with the claim of the analysis presented in the previous sub-section, in which it is the head of aP or vP (= *may* or *magka-*, respectively) that contributes the existential force of existential sentences. If we had claimed instead that existential-*roón* were to contribute in some crucial way to the existential force of existential sentences (in other words, if we were to assume a lexical ambiguity between existential-*roón* and locative-*roón*), then it would be a rather surprising fact that a structure like (73)—where *roón* is not projected—could have the same meaning as a structure where *roón* is projected.

Now, as an alternative analysis of the structure of sentences like (67b), one might propose that *roón* is actually syntactically projected along with its DP complement, but that *roón* and the head of the DP (along with any functional material within DP) are simply unpronounced. If this analysis is the correct one, then the observation that the sentences in (67) are synonymous will obviously be of less significance, and will not be able to demonstrate either way whether *may/magka-* contributes existential force to the meaning of existential sentences.

How might we explain the fact that neither an overt determiner nor any other sort of inflectional morphology within DP may be pronounced? One possibility would be to view this as a consequence of a morpho-tactic condition, which prohibits *magka-* from prefixing to a functional category. In effect, this means that the “choice” not to pronounce *roón* has the consequence of forcing all functional heads coming before the head N of the pivot to be null as well, though they will still be projected. Under this analysis, the structure of a sentence like (67b) would be as in (74).

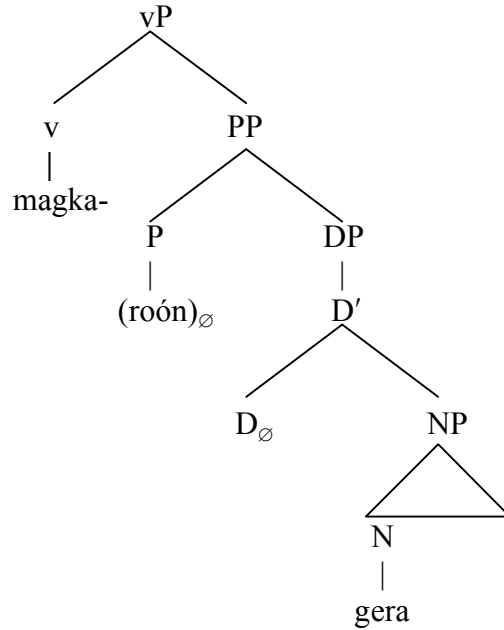
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<sup>18</sup> A structure like (73) might be independently motivated on the basis of many unergative verbs in the language. In general, unergative verbs seem to be formed on the basis of roots that can independently occur as unmarked nouns. Some representative examples:

- |     |                        |                                   |
|-----|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (i) | abono (n. fertilizer)  | m-ag+abono (v. to fertilize)      |
|     | bakasyon (n. vacation) | m-ag+bakasyon (v. to vacation)    |
|     | belo (n. a veil)       | m-ag+belo (v. to wear a veil)     |
|     | salamin (n. glasses)   | m-ag+salamin (v. to wear glasses) |

Supposing the prefix *m-ag+* to be the head of a vP, the verbs in (i) might be argued to have a structure parallel to (73), in which the complement of v is a projection of N.

(74)



The explanation for why functional material projected within DP must be null makes a prediction that the analysis in (73) does not. Concretely, if the pivot is coordinated, then we expect that only the functional material contained within the first DP conjunct would be necessarily null. Nothing should prevent the head of DP from being overt in the second conjunct, however, as the morpho-tactic requirements of *magka-* would already be met with respect to the first conjunct. This prediction appears not to be born out. When the pivot is coordinated, the second conjunct—as with the first conjunct—also may not contain an overt D:

- (75) \*Nagka- [handaan at isa-ng aksidente] sa bahay ni Juan.  
 Asp.exist-party and a-L accident Loc house ns Juan  
 ‘There was a party and an accident at Juan’s house.’

The ungrammaticality of (75) is, of course, predicted by the analysis in (73) where *roón* is not projected and the pivot is an NP complement of the v head *magka-*.<sup>19</sup> Based on this, I conclude that the correct structure for sentences like (67b) is the one in (73).

Given this conclusion regarding the syntax of sentences like (67b), the important upshot is that, now, the question of whether or not there is a lexical ambiguity between existential-*roón* and locative-*roón* now becomes a moot point. Positing a lexical ambiguity would only be worthwhile if existential-*roón* was in some way crucial to the overall interpretation of an existential sentence (e.g., because it contributes existential force or because of a stipulation that it must combine with its argument in a particular way that accounts for the definiteness effect).



## 6 Additional Outcomes of the Analysis

At the close of Section 4, we mentioned three properties that are peculiar to existential sentences. Repeated from above, these are:

- Existential sentences are always impersonal. (Verbal and non-verbal existential sentences).
- The pivot is unmarked for morphological case, suggesting that it has not been assigned abstract Case. (Non-verbal existential sentences only)
- A “Linker” immediately precedes the pivot. (Non-verbal existential sentence only).

The first of these properties has now been accounted for (Section 5.6). I suggested, in particular, that this property follows from the definiteness effect, which—in turn—follows from the lexical semantics of the existential predicate relating, specifically, to the semantic contribution of *may*. In this section, I will attempt to show how the remaining properties listed above might also follow from the way in which lexical semantics of the existential predicate interface with the morpho-syntax.

### 6.1 Case Licensing and the Pivot

We have now provided an answer to the question of why existential sentences *must* be impersonal, but we have not yet answered the question *how* they are licensed as impersonal constructions. In particular, how is it possible that the existential predicate’s argument remains in-situ and uninflected for morphological case? To make this question theoretically more concrete, I assume that an argument that is inflected for morphological case has also received abstract Case, and—furthermore—that an argument that is not inflected for morphological case has not been assigned abstract Case. Assuming that all arguments require (abstract) Case, how is the pivot of an existential sentence licensed? This question, of course, arises for impersonal constructions in other languages, so it may help to begin by considering some of the proposals offered in the context of these other languages.<sup>19</sup>

One current proposal claims that Case is assigned in impersonal constructions (like English, *There were several children in the park*) in a rather unexceptional way. In particular, Case is assigned (or “checked”) through an operation *Agree*, which involves the head of the clause, Tense, which enters into a Probe-Goal relationship with the in-situ internal argument (Chomsky 2000). Crucially, *Agree* is assumed to be the general mechanism that operates over many other types of morpo-syntactic licensing

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<sup>19</sup> This question of Case only arises, of course, for the non-verbal existential sentences. Case is evidently assigned by the verbal existential predicate *magkaroón*. Following Chomsky (1995) among others, we can assume that Case in the verbal existential is assigned by the head of the vP (projected from *magka-*). Note that this runs counter to Burzio’s Generalization (Burzio 1986), which states that verbs that do not have an external argument also do not assign Case.

relationships (agreement, Case assignment, etc.). The only requirement of Agree is that the Probe (in this case, the Case assigning head) c-command the Goal (in this case, the pivot). What makes impersonal constructions unique, according to this proposal, is not the mechanism by which Case is assigned, but rather that Case assignment does not co-occur with an additional operation of movement forcing the Goal to raise to the specifier of the Probe. In impersonal constructions, the specifier requirement of the Probe (if it has one) is generally claimed to be satisfied by an expletive (overt in some languages, covert in others).

Could we say that Case is assigned by the general mechanism of Agree in existential sentences in Tagalog? If so, the assumption I stated at the beginning of this section, that morphological case depends on abstract Case, must be re-thought. Even so, there is still a problem for the Agree proposal. The problem, in short, is that there are no other impersonal constructions in Tagalog that contain a non-verbal predicate with an internal argument licensed in-situ. To put this in more concrete terms, consider the following question. Why can't the predicate locative *naroón* ('be there') occur in an impersonal structure analogous to the existential predicate?

- (76) \*Naroó(-ng) lalaki sa bahay.  
       Pred.there-L man Loc house  
       (A man was there in the house.)

If Agree is the mechanism by which Case is assigned to the internal argument of the existential predicate, why can't it be employed here to license the internal argument of *naroón*, or—for that matter—any other non-verbal predicate that selects an (underlying) internal argument? Since the operation of Agree is independent of particular lexical items, it would not be possible to restrict its application to just those clauses that contain the existential predicate.

Another approach to Case assignment in impersonal constructions is Belletti's Partitive Case hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, unaccusative predicates (which, for our purposes, would include the existential predicate in Tagalog) assign Case (cf. Burzio 1986). Rather than assigning nominative or accusative Case, however, they assign inherent (i.e., semantically dependent) Partitive Case.

The Partitive Case hypothesis encounters a similar type of difficulty as the Agree hypothesis when we attempt to use it to account for Case assignment in Tagalog existential sentences. In particular, the proposal's strength is that it seeks to explain a property (namely, the ability to occur in impersonal structures) of a *class* of predicates—namely, unaccusatives. The insight of this proposal would be lost, however, if it there were only one particular lexical item within this class that was capable of assigning Partitive Case. If we were to adopt this proposal as the basis for explaining Case assigning in existential sentences in Tagalog, we would have to stipulate only one particular lexical item—the existential predicate—out of the broader class of unaccusative predicates that has the ability to assign Partitive Case. Such a move, however, does not seem to be consistent with the Partitive Case proposal.

Overall, then, what is needed in terms of an account of how the pivot of an existential sentence is licensed is an account that involves general principles of Case licensing, but which is also restrictive enough so as not to predict a wider range of

impersonal constructions to occur in the language. To begin sketching out such an analysis, it will help to first have some conception of why arguments, in general, require Case. There are, of course, many answers that have been proposed to this question. Let us, however, focus on just one of these for the time being. Developing an idea of Aoun (1982), Baker (1996) proposes that Case assignment by a predicate to its argument is just one way to satisfy the more general requirement that an arguments be “visible” for semantic role assignment (the so-called “Visibility Condition” (see, e.g., Chomsky 1986). For our purposes, we might state Baker’s intuition in terms of a general condition of the syntax-semantics interface, as follows: Every predicate-argument relations in the semantics must coincide with some (morph-)syntactic relation between predicate and argument. One mechanism that satisfies this condition is Case assignment. Other mechanisms, however—which may include agreement (e.g., Verb-Object agreement) or incorporation—may do the job just as well.

Now, relevant for us, the analysis of *may* proposed above asserts that *may* introduces an existential operator that binds the variable introduced by *roón*’s indefinite argument. There is, then, a syntactic relationship (viz. á viz. the LF structure of the sentence) between the head of aP (= *may*) of the existential predicate and the existential predicate’s indefinite argument. In the spirit of Baker’s proposal, then, I claim that the pivot does not require Case, per se, because there is another syntactic relationship between the existential predicate and its argument—namely, one involving binding. (In the next sub-section, I will also suggest that this syntactic relation actually has a morpho-syntactic reflex, seen by the presence of the linker that appears on the pivot.)

Before moving on, let us note an important consequence of the suggestion just made—namely, concerning the absence of other types of impersonal constructions. Since *may* does not co-occur with other non-verbal unaccusative predicates besides the existential predicate, it follows straightforwardly that these predicates will not be able to occur in impersonal constructions. For these predicates—e.g., *naroón* (‘be there’)—the only way for their internal argument to be licensed is to raise to the subject position of the clause, Spec, TP.

To summarize, I have suggested an account of how the internal argument of the existential predicate is licensed in-situ in the absence of Case in a way that is consistent with a broader view of Case licensing (the “Visibility Condition”). Because the analysis is stated in terms of an idiosyncratic lexical properties of the existential predicate (viz. á viz. the presence of *may*), the problem of over-generation of impersonal constructions based on other non-verbal unaccusative predicates is also correctly circumvented.

## 6.2 The Linker

In existential sentences containing the full existential predicate *mayroón*, there is an obligatory linker that appears immediately before, and forms a constituent with, the pivot. In the examples cited so far, it may not be apparent that the linker forms a constituent with the pivot, since it is typically realized as *-ng* (the allomorph of *na*) en-cliticized to the immediate right of the existential predicate. However, when the pivot scrambles to the right, the linker remains with the pivot. Consider the minimal contrast in (77). In (77a), the pivot immediately follows the existential predicate, and the linker is en-cliticized to the immediate right of the predicate. In (77b), by contrast, the pivot has

scrambled to the right of the locative phrase, and the linker now surfaces as an enclitic to the immediately preceding word.

- (77) a. Mayroón [-*ng mga barga*n] sa Baclaran ngayón.  
 exist.there-L Pl. bargain Loc Baclaran now  
 ‘There are bargains now in Baclaran.’
- b. Maryoón sa Baclaran [-*ng mga barga*n] ngayón.  
 exist.there Loc Baclaran -L Pl. bargain now  
 ‘There are bargains now in Baclaran.’

Another illustration showing that the linker forms a constituent with the pivot is given in (78). Note here that the linker surfaces as *na* rather than *-ng* (typically, *na* is realized *-ng* before a vowel (with the exception of diphthongs) or a nasal consonant).

- (78) Mayroón sa bahay [*na manok*].  
 exist.there Loc house L chicken  
 ‘There is a chicken in the house.’

The linker *na* (or its allomorph *-ng*) have at least two functions in the language. It is the spell-out of the complementizer (C) that introduces embedded complement clauses. It also appears between a noun and a modifier or determiner of the noun, as the examples in (79) illustrate.

- (79) a. buó’-ng koleksiyon ng mga nobela ni Dickens (A+N)  
 whole-L collection of Pl. novel ns Dickens  
 ‘a whole (complete) collection of Dickens’ novels’
- b. masipag na tao (A+N)  
 diligent L person  
 ‘a diligent person’
- c. isa-ng lalaki (D+N)  
 one-L man  
 ‘one man’
- d. ila-ng tao (D+N)  
 some-L person  
 ‘some people’

The linker that appears in existential sentences is plainly not functioning as a complementizer. It stands to reason, then, the linker in existential sentences is functioning more analogously to the linker in the modified NPs in (79)—in particular, as a morpho-syntactic flag indicating that the pivot is syntactically connected, viz. á viz. modification, with some other element in the structure. The approach developed in Section 5 offers a possible explanation. As we have already noted, there is a syntactic and semantic relation between the pivot and *may* of the existential predicate. Concretely, the pivot serves as the restriction for the existential quantifier introduced by *may*. This relationship clearly

parallels the relationship between the noun and adjective or determiner in the NPs in (79). It seems quite plausible, therefore, that the linker on the pivot in existential sentences is the morpho-syntactic encoding of the relationship between the pivot and *may*.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Note that there is no linker when *roón* is not overt. This is due, I believe, to a phonosyntactic constraint. Concretely, the linker is an enclitic, while *may* is a pro-clitic. Notice, for instance, that P2 pronouns (which are prosodic enclitics) cannot appear adjacent to *may*. Rather, *may* forms a prosodic word with an adjacent independent work, and a P2 pronoun appears adjacent to the prosodic domain so-formed.

- (i) a. \*May *siya* salubsób sa kanya-ng daliri'.  
       exist he(s) splinter Loc he(obl)-L finger  
       'He has a splinter on his finger.'
- b. (May salubsób)<sub>φ</sub> *siya* sa kanya-ng daliri'.  
       exist splinter he(s) Loc he(obl)-L finger  
       'He has a splinter on his finger.'

This contrast demonstrates that *may* cannot appear adjacent to an enclitic. This presumably also explains why a linker cannot surface when *roón* is not present. In other words, for the linker to surface, *may* must be part of a phonological word that the linker could enclitize onto.

One might wonder what happens if the pivot scrambles away from *may*, analogous to examples (77b, 78) in the main text. In principle, scrambling the pivot might place it in an environment where there is a prosodic word for the linker to surface on. As it happens, however, scrambling of the pivot is impossible if *roón* is not present.

- (ii) \*[May \_\_\_\_] sa bahay [na manok].  
       exist       Loc house L chicken  
       (There is a chicken in the house.)

This fact presumably relates to a more general fact that *may* cannot immediately precede a trace unless *roón* is also present. Consider (iii):

- (iii) \*Ano ang [may *t*] sa bahay?  
       what s exist Loc house  
       (What is there is in the house?)

Compare to:

- (iv) Ano ang [mayroón *t*] sa bahay?  
       what s exist.there Loc house  
       'What is there in the house?'

## 7 Conclusion

Let me conclude, finally, with some comparative linguistic observations of a rather speculative nature, followed by some open questions relating specifically to existential sentences in Tagalog.

A large portion of this work has focused on arguing against an analysis that posits a Small Clause within the structure of existential sentences in Tagalog. At this time, however, I remain open to the possibility that existential sentences in other languages may, in fact, involve a Small Clause structure. Paul (2000) (see also, Pearson 1996), for instance, argues that complex existential sentences in Malagasy—as in (80)—are formed on the basis of an existential verb *misy*, which selects a Small Clause complement.

- (80) *Misy* [<sub>SC</sub> *zaza mitomany*].  
       exist child cry  
       ‘There is a child crying.’

Existential sentences in Malagasy exhibit some of the same properties of existential sentences in Tagalog—namely, they are impersonal and they exhibit a definiteness effect. In my analysis of existential sentences in Tagalog, I attributed these properties to a piece of the existential predicate—namely, to the *may* of *mayroón* (or—in the case of the verbal existential predicate—to the *magka-* of *magkaroón*). How might this analysis inform (or be informed by) the analysis of existential sentences in Malagasy, which—if Paul’s analysis is correct—have the Small Clause structure schematized in (80)?

In my discussion of both McNally’s (1998) and Chung and Ladusaw’s (2004) approach to the definiteness effect, I devoted much time to showing that neither approach could handle the Tagalog facts because neither would permit an analysis of existential-*roón* as one and the same as locative-*roón*. Notice that the same issue arises in Malagasy but in an even stronger way. Concretely, the Small Clause predicate in (80) is clearly not an “existential predicate”. Thus, we would not want to say that it is ambiguous in any way with McNally’s *be instantiated* predicate, nor would it make much sense to say that it must *obligatorily* combine with the pivot via Chung and Ladusaw’s Restrict. How, then, might we reconcile the fact that there is a definiteness effect with the fact that the Small Clause predicate is the first predicate which the pivot of the existential merges with? One possibility would be to claim that Malagasy *misy*, like Tagalog *may*, has a denotation equivalent to an existential quantifier, which—in turn—forces the lower predicate that combines with the pivot to combine with via Restrict while still allowing the possibility that this lower predicate need not combine obligatorily with its argument via Restrict. If this line of thinking is correct, the only significant difference between Malagasy and Tagalog relates to the syntactic status of *misy* versus *may* (in Malagasy, *misy* is a “full verb” that selects a Small Clause complement; in Tagalog, *may* is a “light” verb that selects a (possibly uncategorized) root.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Paul (2000) (see also Polinsky 1995, and Pearson 1996) argues on the basis of examples like (i) that the pivot of an the existential sentence in Malagasy may also

function as a subject—i.e., that the existential predicate can occur in both an impersonal clause structure as well as a personal one.

- (i) Misy mitomany ve ny zaza?  
       exist cry           Q the child  
       ‘Are some of the children crying?’

Evidence that the pivot occupies the subject position is based on its position relative to the question particle *ve*. *Ve* always occurs at the far right edge of a predicate phrase. Thus, any constituent that occurs to the right of this particle must be external to the predicate phrase.

My suggestion that Tagalog *may* and Malagasy *misy* would not predicate that Malagasy should have existential sentences that have a personal clause structure. To reconcile (i) with the suggestion in the main text, I suggest that although the pivot is external to the predicate phrase, it is not in the canonical subject position.

Pearson (2005) argues that the subject position in Malagasy is actually an A-bar position—Spec, TopicP. In non-existential sentences, Spec, TopicP will be occupied by an overt DP co-indexed with a null-operator that is associated with an extraction gap within TP. Thus, a simple sentence like (ii) would have the parse in (iii), according to Pearson’s analysis.

- (ii) Nividy           mofo ny vehivavy.  
       AT.past.buy bread the woman  
       ‘The woman bought bread.’

- (iii) [<sub>TopP</sub> [<sub>Top</sub> Top [<sub>CP</sub> *Op* [<sub>TP</sub> nividy mofo *t*]]] ny vehivavy]

What would existential sentences look like under Pearson’s theory? Suppose that in existential sentences, Spec, TopicP is occupied by a null expletive. Among other things, this will make the Spec, TopicP position inaccessible to any other argument—namely, the pivot. Where, then, is the pivot of the existential sentence in (i)? Since the expletive in Spec, TopicP is not an argument of the predicate, it would also presumably follow from Pearson’s analysis that it is also not co-indexed with a null-operator in Spec, CP, and there would also presumably be no A-bar extraction trace. This leaves three possible positions available for the pivot: Its base position, Spec, TP, or Spec, CP. Suppose, for concreteness, that the pivot is able to move to Spec, TP, and that the structure of a sentence like (i) is as schematized in (iv):

- (iv) [<sub>TopP</sub> [<sub>Top</sub> Top [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> [<sub>T</sub> T [<sub>PredP</sub> mitomany (ve)]]] ny zaza]] *expl.*]?

Overall, the suggestion here is that, although the pivot has raised out of the predicate phrase, it has only undergone “partial raising”. Such sentences are, therefore,

If the suggestion above relating to Malagasy and Tagalog proves fruitful, we might inquire further about cognates of *may* and/or *misy* in other Austronesian languages (see also, footnote 16). There exists a cognate of Tagalog *may* in at least one other Philippine language, Pangasianan. Very interestingly, this cognate apparently surfaces as a determiner rather than as (a piece of) the existential verb. Consider the examples in (81) (from Brenton 1971).

- (81) a. Itanem            nen Pedro *may* ponti.  
          Agr.Asp.plant ns Pedro s banana  
          ‘The banana was planted by Pedro.’  
       b. Tagá iner *i+máy* ogáw?  
          from where s boy  
          ‘Where is the boy from?’

The fact that this cognate is a determiner might offer positive comparative and/or historical support for my claim that *may* in Tagalog has a determiner-like interpretation—namely, as an existential quantifier. However, this is not so obvious given that the DPs with (i)*may* in (81) are definite rather than indefinite. On the other hand, this definite determiner is (at least historically) a composite of the definite demonstrative *iman* (‘that’)+*so*, where *so* is an indefinite determiner of some sort. Consider (82).

- (82) Pilím *so* gustóm.  
       choose s like  
       ‘Choose what you like.’

Notice that *so* appears before the indefinite pivot of an existential sentence, and regularly alternates with *ay* when preceded by a vowel (for a possibly related cognate in Cebuano, see Sityar 200):

- (83) Wala=y *talon*. (= *wala*+*[so talon]*)  
       exist s eggplant  
       ‘There is some eggplant.’

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still impersonal since the pivot does not occupy the canonical subject position (Spec, TopicP). If this suggestion is on the right track, then—assuming an equivalent analysis of Tagalog *may* and Malagasy *misy*—we expect to find a definiteness effect even in sentences like (i) where the pivot has raised. According to Paul’s data, this is correct.

- (v) \*Misy ny olon-drehetra mihira.  
       exist the people-all sing  
       ‘There is everyone singing.’

This observation follows straightforwardly as long as we suppose that the trace left by “partial raising” differs from the A-bar trace associated with canonical subjects in that the later but not the former trigger a definiteness effect.



It seems reasonable to me to suggest that the presence of a determiner cognate of Tagalog *may* in Pangasinan is not entirely coincidental. However, since I do not have access to more of the facts, this suggestion will have to remain speculative at the present time.

Along with these comparative issues, much work remains to be done on the topic of existential sentences in Tagalog as well.

First, I have set aside the question of whether the subject position in existential clauses is occupied by a null expletive or whether it is simply un-projected altogether. The answer to this question may very well have significant consequences for our understanding of Tagalog clause structure, in particular, with respect to the question of how the predicate-initial property of clauses is derived. If it turns out that an expletive does occupy the subject position of the clause, then it would make sense to view this fact as a consequence of a general requirement that all clauses must have a subject in Spec, TP—i.e., as a consequence of something like the “Extended Projection Principle”. If there is such a requirement forcing the subject to raise out of the predicate phrase, then the predicate-initial property of clauses cannot be analyzed as simply involving verb raising out of the predicate to a position that dominates a predicate-internal subject position—as is assumed in much work on the language.

Second, this work has focused entirely on affirmative existential sentences. Negative existentials are formed with the predicate *wala’*, rather than by adding the sentential negator *hindi’* on top of the existential predicate *mayroón*.

- (84) Wala’-ng tubig sapagá’t sirá’ ang tubo.  
 not.exist-L water because broken s pipe  
 ‘There is no water because the pipe broke.’ (LE 1559)

It is possible that this special negative existential predicate is syntactically insignificant. Unlike the existential *mayroón*, which always occurs in an impersonal clause structure, *wala’* also occurs in a personal clause structure, when it used to negate a predicate locative. Consider (85).

- (85) Wala’ sa klase si Noel kanina.  
 not.exist Loc class s Noel today  
 ‘Noel is not in class today.’

This too could be syntactically insignificant—perhaps amounting to nothing more than homophony between the negative existential predicate and the negative locative predicate. However, until more investigation is carried out, it must remain an open possibility that negative existential sentences have a distinct syntax from their affirmative counterparts.

Finally, the account of the definiteness effect that I proposed abstracted away from certain complicating matters such as, for instance, the ability of indefinite partitives as well as for definiteness in “list contexts” to occur in existential sentences. What is needed to understand these matters is a more in depth exploration of noun phrase

interpretation in Tagalog, and how noun phrase interpretation interacts with the semantics as well as the pragmatics.

While these issues remain open and ripe for future research, I hope to have offered an analysis of the existential construction in Tagalog that solves some of the initial descriptive and analytical problems that this construction presents.

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