

# Existential sentences in Tagalog

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**Abstract** This paper investigates the syntax of existential sentences in Tagalog. It argues that existential sentences in Tagalog are formed on the basis of an unaccusative predicate that selects a noun phrase as its sole internal argument. The positive arguments for this analysis also argue against a small clause analysis of existential sentences in Tagalog (as proposed, for other languages, in work by Stowell 1978, 1981; Chomsky 1981, 1986; Safir 1985; Hoekstra and Mulder 1990; Lasnik 1992; Moro 1997; among others). Additionally, this paper argues for an analysis of the definiteness effect in which the restriction follows from the requirement that the noun phrase that occurs in existential sentences (i.e., the “pivot”) be a property denoting object. This proposal not only accounts for the class of noun phrases that are acceptable in Tagalog existential sentences, but also helps to shed light on various morphosyntactic aspects of existential sentences in the language, relating—in particular—to their impersonal clause structure, morphological case, as well as other properties.

**Keywords** Tagalog · Existential constructions · Definiteness effect · Impersonal constructions · Restrict

## 1 Introduction

This paper investigates the syntax of existential sentences in Tagalog. I aim to show that despite some varied and rather intricate morphosyntactic patterns, which lead us to identify four distinct types of existential sentence, existential sentences have a fairly simple structure overall. In particular, existential sentences in Tagalog are impersonal sentences formed on the basis of an unaccusative predicate that

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selects a noun phrase complement (Jenkins 1975; Milsark 1974; Williams 1984; Chung 1987; McNally 1992). The syntax of existential sentences in Tagalog therefore contrasts with the syntax which has been proposed for English and other languages, involving a small clause complement of a copula verb (Stowell 1978, 1981; Chomsky 1981, 1986; Safir 1985; Hoekstra and Mulder 1990; Lasnik 1992; Moro 1997; among others). As a result, one of the larger conclusions of this work is that there is no single syntax associated with existential sentences that is valid for all languages. Rather than being a negative result, however, this conclusion is exactly the one that is expected from the point of view of any theory that seeks to avoid positing construction specific rules and principles. On this view, the difference in syntactic structure associated with existential sentences is simply a consequence of the fact that different languages exploit the different lexical and syntactic resources that are available to them: Languages with existential sentences of the small clause type, for instance, usually exploit a non-construction specific copular element plus an independently available small clause structure, while a language like Tagalog—given the analysis I will argue for here—exploits an unaccusative predicate to form its existential sentences.

Much of the “exotic” look of existential sentences in Tagalog relates to the morphosyntactic properties that set them apart from “ordinary” types of clauses in the language relating to case, the absence of an overt subject, and other properties to be described below. What I aim to show, however, is that—rather than requiring any construction specific mechanisms—much of this morphosyntax can be understood to follow from a few language-particular facts in conjunction with an analysis of the definiteness effect stated in terms of a lexical-semantic restriction which requires the existential predicate’s argument to be a property denoting object (see, e.g., McNally 1992, 1998; van Geenhoven 1998; and Chung and Ladusaw 2004).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a brief background to Tagalog. Sections 3 and 4 argue for the syntactic analysis of existential sentences alluded to above, and Section 5 is devoted to the definiteness effect and its interaction with certain language particular factors in deriving some of the additional morphosyntactic properties associated with existential sentences. In Section 6, I discuss some consequences and suggest a modification of the basic analysis presented in Section 5 relating to the “alternation” between existential sentences and predicate locative sentences. Section 7 concludes the paper.

## 2 Background

Tagalog is a predicate initial language. Predicates may be of any major category type (verb, noun, adjective, or preposition), and there is no overt copula. In pragmatically neutral clauses, the predicate precedes its arguments. The word order of clauses is otherwise flexible. Consider the following examples.

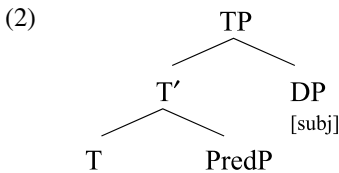
- (1) a. *Humalili*                    *si Tomas kay Ricardo sa*    *pagka-kapitan.*  
 AGR.ASP.replace S *Tomas* OBL *Ricardo* OBL *captain*  
 ‘Tomas replaced Ricardo as the captain.’                    (LE 576, modified)

- b. *Gumawa ng krokis si Tomas upang i-pakita sa amin*  
 AGR.ASP.draw NS map S Tomas in.order AGR-show OBL 1PL(OBL)  
*ang daa-ng pa-punta sa kanya-ng bahay.*  
 S way-LK AGR-go LOC 3SG(OBL)-LK house  
 ‘Tomas drew us a map to show us the way to get to his house.’ (LE 354)
- c. *Bastos ang tao kung tumitig sa kapwa tao.*  
 rude S person if AGR.ASP.stare OBL other person  
 ‘It’s rude if a person stares at another person.’ (LE 166)

With the exception of certain types of impersonal clauses (see Sabbagh 2006), each clause has an argument that can be identified as the subject. This is the argument that behaves with respect to various syntactic processes<sup>1</sup> as the most prominent argument of the clause (see Guilfoyle et al. 1992; Richards 1993; Kroeger 1993; Rackowski 2003; Aldridge 2004; among others). Arguments are inflected for morphological case: In the above examples, the subject is the argument that is marked by *ang* (for common nouns) or *si* (for proper names). Internal, non-oblique, arguments are marked by *ng* [nang] (for common nouns) or *ni* (for proper names) and oblique arguments are marked by *sa* (for common nouns) or *kay* (for proper names).

Verbal predicates typically inflect for agreement with the subject. Rather than involving features of the subject such as its number or person features, this agreement evidently reflects a more abstract feature of the subject such as its thematic role (e.g., as agent or theme) or its abstract Case (e.g., nominative or accusative) (see Rackowski 2003 for recent discussion of these alternatives).<sup>2</sup>

Throughout this paper I will assume that Tagalog has the clause structure schematized in (2), in which the clause is projected from an inflection head, T(ense), which takes as its complement a predicate phrase (=VP, AP, DP, or PP). To account for the initial order of the predicate within the clause, I assume, following Guilfoyle et al. (1992), that the subject occupies TP’s specifier, which is external to the predicate phrase and occurs to the right.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup>For instance, relativization, quantifier float, raising, and conjunction reduction (see Sect. 3.2).

<sup>2</sup>Since this agreement will not be directly relevant to the topic of this article, it will simply be glossed as AGR (for Agreement). Other glossing conventions used here are as follows: S=Subject, NS=Non-subject, OBL=Oblique, LOC=Locative, ASP=Aspect (PERF=Perfective, IMPERF=Imperfective, CONT=contemplative, INF=Infinitive), PL=Plural, LK=Linker, COMP=Complementizer, PRED=Predicate, REL=Relative clause complementizer, INV=Inversion.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Kroeger (1993), Richards (1993), Rackowski (2003), Aldridge (2004). These authors assume that the subject remains internal to the predicate phrase. The proposal in (2) is argued for in greater detail in Sabbagh (in prep.), where the question of word orders other than those involving subject-final order is addressed.

With this much as background, we can now turn to existential sentences—the main focus of the remainder of this article.

### 3 Existential sentences

#### 3.1 Morphosyntactic preliminaries

From a morphosyntactic point of view, Tagalog appears to have at least four different existential constructions—i.e., sentences whose basic function is to affirm the non-emptiness of a set denoted by some noun phrase.<sup>4</sup> Starting with the existential sentences in (3), note that they consist minimally of an element *may* ‘exist’ followed by a noun phrase (henceforth, the *pivot*), which in turn may be followed by a locative PP (see (3a–b)) or a phrase of some other category such as a VP (see (3c)).

#### (3) Type I Existential Sentences

- a. May malaki-ng disyerto sa Australya.  
 exist big-LK desert LOC Australia  
 ‘There is a big desert in Australia.’ (LE 450)
- b. May mga tao sa labas.  
 exist PL person LOC outside  
 ‘There are people outside.’ (LE 905)
- c. May babae-ng darating sa bahay ko.  
 exist woman-LK AGR.ASP.come LOC house 1SG(NS)  
 ‘There was a woman (who) came to my house.’

The existential sentences in (4) below are basically identical to those in (3), except for two important differences. First, *may*, which appears alone in the examples in (3), occurs with another element, *roon* ‘there, in it’ in the examples in (4). Second, the nominal pivot in the examples in (4) is inflected with a linker. This linker, which will be discussed in more detail below, surfaces as an enclitic (*-ng*) to any preceding prosodic word that ends in a vowel and as *na* elsewhere (e.g., as in (4c), where the pivot has been displaced to the right of the locative phrase and as a result is preceded by a word ending in a consonant).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>This paper deals mostly with positive existential sentences. Negative existential sentences are touched upon briefly in Sect. 4.2.2.

<sup>5</sup>Note that (4c) positively establishes that the linker and the pivot form a constituent of some sort. The example in (i) offers another illustration of this fact. In this example the pivot is once again displaced to the right of a locative PP. Here, however, the word that ends up preceding the pivot as a result of the displacement ends in a vowel, and so the linker is realized as the enclitic *-ng*.

- (i) Mayroon sa Australya-ng malaki-ng disyerto.  
 exist.there LOC Australia-LK big-LK desert  
 There’s a big desert in Australia.

(4) **Type II Existential Sentences**

- a. Mayroo-ng aksidente dito kahapon.  
exist.there-LK accident here yesterday  
'There was an accident here yesterday.'
- b. Mayroo-ng mga bata-ng hindi n-agaaral  
exist.there-LK PL child-LK not AGR.ASP-study  
'There are children who don't study.'
- c. Mayroon sa bahay na manok.  
exist.there LOC house LK chicken  
'There's a chicken in the house.'

Next, consider the existential sentences in (5). These existential sentences differ from those in (3–4) in that, instead of either *may* or *mayroon*, we find a form of the element *magkaroon* which is inflected for aspect. Additionally, and in contrast to the examples in (3–4) where the nominal pivot appears in a bare form (i.e., uninflected for case), the nominal pivot in these existential sentences is inflected for case. Note that the specific case that the pivot inflects for is the same case which normally marks direct objects—namely *ng* [nang] (see Sect. 1, example (1b)).

(5) **Type III Existential Sentences**

- a. Magkaka-roon ng isa-ng rebisyon ng libron-ng iyan.  
ASP.exist-there NS one-LK revision NS book-LK this  
'There will be a revision of this book.' (LE 1568)
- b. Nagka-roon ng giyera sa Europe.  
ASP.exist-there NS war LOC Europe  
'There was a war in Europe.'

Finally, the existential sentences in (6) are clearly related to those in (5) in that they consist of an inflected form of the element *magka*. In contrast to the existential sentences in (4), but similar to the examples in (3), the element *roon* is absent in these constructions. Furthermore, as with the existential sentences in (3) and (4), the nominal pivot is uninflected for morphological case in existential sentences of this type.

(6) **Type IV Existential Sentences**

- a. Nagka- [gera] sa Europe.  
ASP.exist war LOC Europe  
There will be a war in Europe.
- b. Magkaka- [problema sa pera] kung hindi titigil sa  
ASP.exist- problem OBL money if not AGR.ASP.stop OBL  
paggasta.  
spending  
'You will have (lit. there will be) a problem with money if you don't stop spending.'

- c. Nagkaka- [party] ba para sa titser mo?  
 ASP.exist- party Q for OBL teacher 2SG(NS)  
 'Is there a party for your teacher?'

Although the existential sentences in (6) share with the existential sentences in (3–4) the fact that the nominal pivot is uninflected for case, there is a subtle difference between these examples relating to the category of the pivot. Concretely, the nominal pivot of the existential sentences in (6) is a minimal NP, while the pivot of the existential sentences in (3), (4), and (5) is (or at least, can be) a full-fledged DP. Two observations support this claim.

First, as the following examples illustrate, the pivot of the existential sentences in (3) and (4) may be preceded by an indefinite determiner.

- (7) a. Mayroo-ng isa-ng wika-ng opisyal para sabuo-ng bansa.  
 exist.there-LK one-LK language-LK official for whole-LK nation  
 'There is one official language for the whole nation.'
- b. Hindi ko in-isip na mayroo-ng kahit sino-ng  
 not 1SG(NS) AGR.ASP.think COMP exist.there-LK even who-LK  
 tao doon.  
 person there  
 'I didn't think that there was anyone (lit., even+who) there.'
- c. Mayroo-ng ila-ng mga dahilan kung bakit atrasado ang mga  
 exist.there-LK some-LK PL reason COMP why late S PL  
 bayad.  
 payment  
 'There are a few reasons why the payments are late.' (ITS)
- d. Mayroo-ng marami-ng ilaw sa silid na pinagkakatipunan  
 exist.there-LK many-LK lamp LOC room LK gathered  
 nila.  
 3PL(NS)  
 'There were many lamps in the room where we were gathered.' (TB)
- e. May kaunti-ng gulo sa Mindanao.  
 exist few-LK riot LOC Mindanao  
 'There were a few riots in Mindanao.'

By contrast, the nominal pivot of the existential sentences of the type in (6) cannot be preceded by any of these determiners.

- (8) a. \*Magkaka- [isa-ng gera-ng malaki] sa Europe.  
 ASP.exist- a-LK war-LK big LOC Europe  
 'There will be a big war in Europe.'
- b. \*Nagka- [marami-ng handaan] sa bahay ni Juan.  
 ASP.exist- many-LK party LOC house NS Juan  
 'There were many parties at Juan's house.'
- c. \*Nagka- [kaunti-ng gulo] sa Mindanao.  
 ASP.exist- few-LK riot LOC Mindanao  
 'There were a few riots in Mindanao.'

In fact, the nominal pivot may not even be preceded by *mga*, the inflectional morpheme that overtly indicates plurality.<sup>6</sup>

- (9) \*Nagka- [mga gera] sa Europe.  
 ASP.exist- PL war LOC Europe  
 ‘There were wars in Europe.’

Supposing that the determiners in (7–8) belong to the functional category D, which—following Abney (1987)—is the head of the phrasal projection DP, the difference between existential sentences in (3), (4), and (5) on the one hand, and (6) on the other, can then be straightforwardly described in terms of the syntactic category of the nominal pivot. In particular, the nominal pivot can be a DP in existential sentences of the type in (3), (4), and (5), but must be a simple NP in existential sentences of the type in (6). Crucially, the example in (6b) above, in which the head noun of the nominal pivot is followed by a complement, indicates that the pivot in these existential sentences can be a maximal projection of N (i.e., NP) rather than, say, simply N. Further evidence for this conclusion comes from the examples in (10), which show that the nominal pivot may be modified by an adjective, which, like other adjectives that modify NPs, may occur on either side of the head of the pivot (NP).<sup>7</sup>

- (10) a. Magkaka- [gera-ng malaki] sa Europe.  
 ASP.exist- war-LK big LOC Europe  
 ‘There will be a big war in Europe.’  
 b. Nagka- [malaki-ng aso] sa bahay.  
 ASP.exist- big-LK dog LOC house  
 ‘There was a big dog in the house.’

Observe finally that the nominal pivot may be coordinated, as shown in (11). This fact is consistent with an analysis of the nominal pivot as an NP rather than as a simple N.

- (11) 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.’

The table in (12) summarizes the major morphosyntactic differences among the four types of existential sentences we have encountered so far.

<sup>6</sup>NPs that are not marked by *mga* can be interpreted either as singular or plural.

<sup>7</sup>Taken together with the observations in the preceding paragraphs of the main text, this fact should make it clear that *isa* ‘one’, *marami* ‘many’, *kaunti* ‘few’, etc. are determiners rather than adjectives (cf. Higginbotham 1987). Note furthermore that if they were adjectives, we would expect that examples like (8) would be grammatical on par with the examples in (10), contrary to the fact. Also, unlike adjectives, which may occur either to the left or to the right of the noun they modify, determiners always occur to the left of the noun (thus, *lalaki-ng marami* ‘many men’ is ungrammatical). Given that Tagalog is a head-initial language, this follows from their categorization as determiners (D), which function as the head of a (head-initial) projection of DP.

(12) TYPE, Example PREFIX	<i>roon</i>		PIVOT
TYPE I, Ex. (3)	may	roon	LINKER + DP
TYPE II, Ex. (4)	may	—	DP
TYPE III, Ex. (5)	magka	roon	CASE + DP
TYPE IV, Ex. (6)	magka	—	NP

### 3.2 The pivot is an internal argument

Despite the rather intricate morphosyntactic differences among the four types of existential sentences discussed above, all existential sentences in Tagalog seem to share a common general syntactic profile. Concretely, all existential sentences are impersonal constructions in that they have no overt subject and the nominal pivot functions as an internal argument of some sort.

That the pivot is an internal argument rather than a subject is established by a couple of observations. First, one property of subjects in Tagalog is that they can serve as the shared subject of coordinated predicates. The example in (13) illustrates.

- (13) [Nakakita ng kalansay] at [natakot] ang bawa't babae.  
 AGR.ASP.see NS skeleton and AGR.ASP.afraid S each woman  
 'Each woman saw a skeleton and got scared.'

By contrast, non-subjects (namely, direct objects and VP-internal agents) cannot serve as the shared argument of coordinated predicates (see Kroeger 1993: 35; Sabbagh 2008).

- (14) \*[N-agsara si Juan] at [n-agbukas si Pedro] ng pintuan.  
 AGR.ASP.close S Juan and AGR.ASP.open S Pedro NS door  
 'Juan closed, and Pedro opened, a door (=the same door).'

With respect to this type of argument sharing, the pivot in existential sentences appears to pattern as a non-subject (i.e., internal argument) rather than as a subject. Observe, in particular, that the pivot cannot function as the shared argument of conjoined predicates.

- (15) a. \*[Mayroon sa Australya] at [mayroon din sa California] -ng  
 exist.there LOC Australia and exist.there also LOC California -LK  
 malaki-ng disyerto.  
 big-LK desert  
 'There is in Australia, and there is also in California, a big desert.'
- b. \*[Magkakaroon para sa titser] at [magkakaroon din para sa  
 ASP.exist.there for OBL teacher and ASP.exist.there also for OBL  
 mga bata] ng party.  
 PL child NS party  
 'There will be for the teacher, and there will also be for the children, a party.'

Further evidence that the pivot is not a subject comes from the construction that is used to express possession. As in many other Austronesian languages, the same



predicates in Tagalog (*may(roon)* and *magka(roon)*) that appear in existential sentences are also used to express possession. In fact, the possessive constructions are identical in every respect to existential sentences, with the exception that in possessive constructions there is an additional argument that corresponds semantically to the possessor of a noun phrase that occurs in the same position that the pivot of existential sentences occupies. Consider the examples in (16).

- (16) a. Mayroo-ng malaki-ng aso si Maria.  
 exist.there-LK big-LK dog S Maria  
 ‘Maria has a big dog.’  
 b. Nagkaroon siya ng iba’t iba-ng inspirasyon.  
 ASP-exist.there 3SG(S) NS other.and other inspiration  
 ‘She had another inspiration.’

Note that the possessor argument is inflected with the same morphological case marker (*silang*) that occurs with subjects of ordinary (i.e., non-existential) clauses (see Sect. 2). This is an initial indication that the possessor functions as the subject of the sentences in (16). Furthermore, the example in (17) reveals that the possessor can function as the shared argument of conjoined predicates, which—as pointed out above—is an exclusive property of subjects.

- (17) [Mayroo-ng malaki-ng aso] at [mayroon di-ng kaunti-ng pusa] si  
 exist.there-LK big-LK dog and exist.there also-LK small-LK cat S  
 Maria.  
 Maria  
 ‘Maria has a big dog and (she also has) a little cat.’

What these possessive sentences show, then, is that the noun phrase that appears after *mayroon/magkaroon* is not in complementary distribution with an overt subject and therefore that it is not itself a subject. Assuming that the noun phrase following *mayroon/magkaroon* in the possessive sentences of (16) bears the same grammatical relation to the predicate as the pivot of existential sentences, it follows that the pivot is also not a subject in existential sentences.

In short, existential sentences are a type of impersonal construction, in which the pivot is an internal argument and there is no overt subject. This is, perhaps, the expected conclusion given that existential sentences are impersonal in many other languages as well. Nonetheless, it is a non-trivial question to ask why they are impersonal in Tagalog. Putting this question aside for the moment (I will return to it in Section 5), we now move on to a more detailed look at the syntax of existential sentences.

## 4 The syntax of existential sentences

### 4.1 Two analyses

As a first step towards uncovering the syntax of Tagalog existential sentences, consider the element *roon* ‘there’, which appears in existential sentences of the type

(4) and (5). At the very least, this element is homophonous with the distal locative pro-form in the language meaning ‘there, in it’, which appears to have other uses in the language. As seen in (18), for instance, it has a function as a locative adverb. In (19a), it appears as the root of a non-verbal predicate meaning ‘be there’, and in (19b) it serves as the root of a verbal predicate meaning ‘go there’. In each of these examples, *roon* has a clear locative meaning.

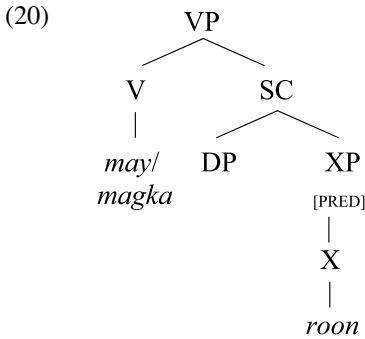
- (18) *Pumunta ka roon sa tindaha-ng iyon.*  
 AGR.INF.go 2SG(S) there LOC store-LK that  
 ‘Go over there to that store.’ (LE 456)
- (19) a. *Naroon sa Maynila si Juan.*  
 PRED.there LOC Manila S Juan.  
 ‘Juan is there in Manila.’
- b. *Puma-roon ka at tingnan mo kung ano ang*  
 AGR.ASP.go-there 2SG(S) and AGR.ASP.see 2SG(NS) COMP what S  
*nangyayari.*  
 AGR.ASP.happen  
 ‘Go there and see what is happening.’ (LE 457)

Despite its homophony with this locative pro-form, *roon* evidently does not import the same locative meaning in existential sentences that it has in the examples in (18–19). This is evident in examples like (4a) above, in which the proximate locative pro-form *dito* ‘here’ appears. If *roon* literally meant ‘there’ in the context of existential sentences, we would expect this sentence to be semantically incoherent as a result of the contradictory meanings associated with the different locative expressions. This sentence, however, is perfectly coherent.

The presence of this semantically “bleached” locative is not particularly unusual from a cross-linguistic point of view. Existential sentences in many languages consist of a locative pro-form that is homophonous with a distal locative but which does not have the same literal meaning (e.g., *there* in English, *ci* in Italian). I will not have more to say about the exact way in which *roon* ‘loses’ its original locative meaning in existential sentences (see Hoekstra and Mulder 1990: 34; fn.17 and Moro 1997, Chapter 3 for discussion), but will focus instead on the clear morphosyntactic relationship among the various uses of this element.

Note that when *roon* does surface in existential sentences (as in the examples in (4) and (5)), it appears to form part of a word with the elements *may* or *magka*. Important for our purposes is the observation that *roon* need not be overt in existential sentences (as in the examples in (3) and (6)). Taken together with the fact that *roon* appears in contexts other than the existential sentences, these observations raise the possibility that *may/magka* and *roon* may be separate morphemes—in other words, that *mayroon* and *magkaroon* might be segmentable as *may* + *roon* and *magka* + *roon*, respectively. Suppose this is so, and suppose furthermore that this decomposition is represented at the syntactic level such that *roon* and *may/magka* each head a separate syntactic projection. Given these assumptions, which I will fill out the arguments for in the next subsection, let us now consider two possibilities that open out for the analysis of existential sentences containing *roon*.

Following Moro’s (1997) analysis of existential sentences in Italian and English (see also Hoekstra and Mulder 1990), the first possibility would be to treat *roon* as the predicate of a small clause (SC), which appears as the complement of *may/magka*.<sup>8</sup> On this analysis, the most natural assumption to make concerning the nominal pivot is that it serves as the subject of the small clause. Putting these two assumptions together, existential sentences would have the partial structure depicted in (20).<sup>9</sup>



This proposal is related to the analysis of English existential sentences originally proposed by Stowell (1981) and Safir (1985) (see also Stowell 1978). Minor differences aside, it has also been the favored analysis of existential sentences in Irish (McCloskey 2006), Malagasy (Pearson 1996; Paul 2000; cf. Polinsky 2005), Rotuman (den Dikken 2003) as well as other languages.

As an alternative to the small clause analysis in (20), we might consider the possibility of analyzing *may/magka* as the content of a functional head, *v*, which is the head of a two-tiered verb phrase structure (*v*P) of the sort proposed by Chomsky (1995) and others. On this analysis, we can take *roon* to be the head of *v*'s complement, a VP, in which the nominal pivot functions as the complement of V. This analysis is schematized in (21).<sup>10</sup>

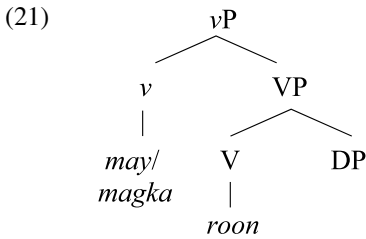
<sup>8</sup>For present purposes, it will suffice to treat both *may* and *magka* as verbal (either V or *v*). A more complete analysis will have to say a bit more, specifically with respect to the fact that *may(roon)* unlike *magka(roon)* does not inflect for aspect. Thus, *may(roon)* patterns with other “pseudo-verbs” in the language such as *gusto* ‘want’, *maaari* ‘can’, *kailangang* ‘should’, and others, which also do not inflect for aspect.

<sup>9</sup>Aldridge (2006) claims that the complement of verbs such as *ginamit* ‘use’, as in her example in (i), is a small clause.

- (i) *Ginagamit* [SC na starting 5] ng kanila-ng coach si Gilbert.  
 AGR.ASP.USE LK starting 5 NS 3SG(OBL)-LK coach S Gilbert  
 ‘His coach is using Gilbert as (one of the) starting 5.’

If Aldridge is correct in claiming that the bracketed string in (i) is indeed a small clause, then the small clause analysis for existential sentences has independent plausibility. However, the properties of the construction in (i) (in particular, whether they are actually small clauses or not) have not, to my knowledge, been investigated in detail by Aldridge or others. One initial reason for skepticism concerns the fact that the (putative) small clause subject (*si Gilbert*) in (i) does not appear to form a constituent with its predicate (*na starting 5*).

<sup>10</sup>This type of structure is independently attested to the extent that other verbal predicates in the language can be argued to have a similar structure. For instance, the most typical regular verbs in Tagalog (both



Modulo the decomposition of the existential predicate, (21) is, in essence, Milsark's (1974) analysis of English existential sentences (see also Jenkins 1975; Williams 1984; McNally 1992; and others). It has been proposed for other languages as well, including the Austronesian languages Chamorro (Chung 1987) and Niuean (Massam 2008).

Under either of these analyses, something must be said about the way in which *roon* and *may/magka* come together to form a single lexical item. This can be handled straightforwardly by supposing that the two elements are brought together by a process of head-movement (or 'lexical sharing'; Wescoat 2002), which merges the content of the category dominating *roon* into the position of the category dominating *may*.

In Sect. 4.3, I will argue that the *vP* analysis in (21) is superior to the small clause analysis in (20). Before getting to this, however, I first discuss some of the key motivation for the claim that *mayroon* and *magkaroon* are morphologically and syntactically complex. Readers who are satisfied with this conclusion already may wish to skip this section and move on directly to Sect. 4.3.

## 4.2 Decomposing the existential predicate

### 4.2.1 Syntactic differences

An analysis in which *mayroon* and *magkaroon* are morphologically and syntactically decomposed offers an illuminating account of the syntactic differences between existential sentences where *roon* occurs (examples like (4) and (5) above) and those where it does not (examples like (3) and (6) above).

Consider first the difference between the existential sentences in (3) and (4). As noted above, the main difference between these two types of existential sentences relates to the presence versus the absence of a linker, which the nominal pivot is inflected for in the examples in (4) but not in the existential sentences in (3) where

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transitive as well as intransitive) are formed by the prefix *pag* plus a root of some sort (the initial [p] of *pag* is fused with a nasal indicating aspect and agreement).

(i) m-aginit (=N+pag-init) 'to heat', m-aglabas (=N+pag-labas) 'to take out', etc.

Travis (2000) and Rackowski (2003) assume that *pag* and other similar verbal prefixes of its kind are instances of the functional head *v*—i.e., that verbs like those in (i) have the structure in (ii):

(ii) [<sub>VP</sub> pag<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> √ROOT (complement)]]

*roon* does not occur. Foreshadowing the discussion in Section 5, a key ingredient of the semantic analysis of existential sentences that I will develop there is that *roon* (conceived of as a separate lexical item) and the nominal pivot are semantically composed via a semantic composition rule *Restrict* (Chung and Ladusaw 2004). *Restrict* is a non-saturating compositional rule that adds the property content of a predicate's argument to the predicate in a manner that closely parallels the effect of another non-saturating semantic composition rule—namely, *Predicate Modification* (see Heim and Kratzer 1998). *Predicate Modification* is the composition rule that is responsible for semantically combining NPs with their modifiers. Important for our immediate purposes is the observation that a linker always surfaces in constructions involving modification of this sort in Tagalog. Consider the examples in (22).

- (22) a. ahas na makamadag  
 snake LK venomous  
 'venomous snake'
- b. ang mga esudyante-ng n-agtrabaho nang masikap  
 s PL student-LK AGR.ASP-work ADV hard  
 'the students who worked hard'

In short, *Restrict* and *Predicate Modification* have the same semantic effect of combining two properties and creating a new property out of their intersection. Supposing that the linker is a morphological 'flag' for this general type of semantic composition, the presence of the linker in existential constructions when *roon* composes with the nominal pivot via *Restrict* flows from the same principle that explains its presence in constructions involving NP modification. Given this, the question that now arises is why the linker does not appear when *roon* is absent, i.e., why a sentence like (23) is ungrammatical with the linker.

- (23) May (\*na) manok sa bahay.  
 exist LK chicken LOC house  
 'There's a chicken in the house.'

Given the decompositional analysis of *mayroon* in which *roon* is the head of its own syntactic projection, the simplest answer to this question is that this syntactic projection is absent altogether when *roon* does not appear. Concretely, instead of *may* combining with a SC complement (as in (20)) or with a VP complement (as in (21)), it is conceivable that existential sentences of the type in (3) have a more minimal structure in which *may* is merged directly with the pivot as illustrated in (24).<sup>11</sup>

- (24)
- $$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{VP/vP} \\
 \swarrow \quad \searrow \\
 \text{V/v} \quad \text{DP} \\
 | \\
 \text{may}
 \end{array}$$

<sup>11</sup>In Sect. 6, I will propose that *may* as well as *magka* have a meaning equivalent to that of an existential quantifier. Once this proposal is fleshed out, it will become clear that the syntactic structure in (24) as well as the one in (26) below is semantically coherent.

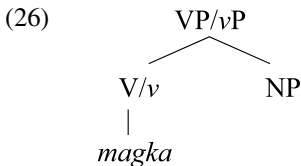
Since the presence of the linker is crucially related to the mode of composition (namely, Restrict) between *roon* and the pivot, its absence when *roon* is not projected follows.

On the alternative view in which *mayroon* is not syntactically decomposed, the difference between the two types of existential sentences would presumably have to be stipulated at the level of individual lexical items. Concretely, we would have to posit two lexical entries, such as the ones in (25a) and (25b), in which the presence versus absence of the linker is explicitly stipulated as part of the subcategorization of each individual lexical item.

- (25) a. (PFORM: MAYROON, CAT: V, SUBCAT: [ \_\_D<sub>[+linker]</sub>])  
 b. (PFORM: MAY, CAT: V, SUBCAT: [ \_\_D<sub>[-linker]</sub>])

While these lexical entries correctly describe the facts, they neither aid in explaining why the linker surfaces only when it does, nor are they able to capture the parallel between the presence of the linker in existential sentences and in constructions involving noun phrase modification (as in (22)). The analysis in which *mayroon* is syntactically decomposed therefore offers a more attractive account of the facts.

The analysis of the existential sentences in (3) as in (24) can be generalized to the existential sentences in (6) as well. Concretely, suppose that these sentences too have the minimal structure illustrated in (26), in which the syntactic projection contributed by *roon* is absent.



The fact that the pivot in these examples is categorically an NP rather than a DP might then be attributed to a requirement that the complement of *magka* must be a projection of a lexical head rather than functional head. This requirement will be satisfied when the complement is either an NP (as in (26)) or a VP headed by *roon* (e.g., as with the structure in (21)), but not if it is a DP.<sup>12</sup>

It would, of course, be possible to account for the differences between the existential sentences in (5) and (6) by positing two separate lexical entries in which the difference with respect to the category of the pivot is stipulated—as in (27), for instance.

- (27) a. (PFORM: MAGKAROON, CAT: V, SUBCAT: [ \_\_D])  
 b. (PFORM: MAGKA, CAT: V, SUBCAT: [ \_\_N])

Besides the stipulative nature of this account, the proposal has the further disadvantage that the lexical entries in (27) are completely unrelated to those in (25). The

<sup>12</sup>The requirement will presumably not be met if the complement is a small clause, which is not a (projection of a) lexical category. This point need not concern us too much, however, since I will soon argue against the small clause analysis in any case.

analysis is therefore unable to capture any generalizations regarding the form of the different types of existential sentences. The decompositional analysis, on the other hand, allows us to observe a generalization about the lexical entries of *may* and *magka*. In particular, both of these lexical items have a uniform subcategorization that can either be satisfied by a Small Clause/VP complement, or by something that is nominal ([+N]—i.e., either DP or NP).<sup>13</sup>

Overall, then, the analysis of *mayroon* and *magkaroon* as syntactically decomposed offers the most revealing and arguably most parsimonious account of the morphosyntactic facts relating to the presence versus absence of *roon* in existential sentences.

#### 4.2.2 Negative existentials

Negative existential sentences provide a second argument for the decompositional analysis. First, observe that existential sentences formed by *magka(roon)* are negated with the negative word *hindi* which is used for ordinary sentential negation in Tagalog.

- (28) a. Hindi n-agkaroon ng tao sa bahay.  
not ASP-exist.there NS person LOC house  
'There was no one in the house.'
- b. Hindi n-agkaka- [trabaho] dito.  
not ASP-exist- work here  
'There's no work here.'

By contrast, existential sentences formed with *may(roon)* cannot be negated with *hindi*.

- (29) \*Hindi may(roo-ng) tao sa bahay.  
not exist.there-LK person LOC house  
'There's no one in the house.'

Instead, the negative of existential sentences formed with *may(roon)* employs a special negative form *wala* 'not.exist'. The examples in (30) illustrate.

- (30) a. Wala-ng tubig sapagka't sira ang tubo.  
not.exist-LK water because broke S pipe  
'There's no water because the pipe is broken.' (LE 1559)

<sup>13</sup>More formally, *may* and *magka* would have the (simplified) lexical entry (i). To complete the picture, we can say that *roon* has the lexical entry in (ii) (NB. Both of these lexical entries are stated with respect to the *vP* analysis in (14), which I will argue for in more detail in the next section):

(i) (PFORM: MAY/MAGKA, CAT: V, SUBCAT: [ \_\_\_ {V<sub>roon</sub>, [+N]}])  
(ii) (PFORM: ROON, CAT: V, SUBCAT: [ \_\_\_ D])

Here, I use [+N] in the SUBCAT to allow either an NP or DP complement. In the case of *magka*, where there is an additional restriction that its complement must be lexical, the NP option will follow. I leave the question open for now whether the pivot of the existential sentences in (3) (i.e., those formed with *may* but not *roon*) can freely alternate between being a DP and a simple NP.

- b. Wala-ng hindi gusto-ng m-agkaroon ng kapayappan sa  
 not.exist-LK not want-LK ASP-exist.there NS peace LOC  
 Pilipinas.  
 Philippines  
 'There is no one who doesn't want peace in the Philippines.'  
 (*Pinoy Weekly*, August 25, 2006)

Importantly for the argument to be made here, observe that while examples like (29) are impossible, examples where *wala* and *roon* co-occur are attested.

- (31) a. Ngunit dahil nga masyado-ng malayo sa Maynila at wala  
 but because EMP excessive-LK far LOC Manila and not.exist  
 roo-ng trabaho, n-agbalik-bayan sila.  
 there-LK work AGR.ASP-return-home 3PL(S)  
 'But because it's very far from Manila, and because there's no work,  
 they returned home.'
- b. Wala roo-ng anuman na katanggap-tanggap sa inyo, 'di  
 not.exist there-LK anything LK received OBL 2SG(OBL) not  
 ba?  
 Q  
 'I didn't receive anything (lit., there wasn't anything received) from  
 you, was there?'
- c. Nang mga araw na iyon ay wala na roo-ng mga bangka.  
 ADV PL day LK this INV not.exist EMP there-LK PL boat  
 'In those days, there were no boats.'

These examples were initially discovered through a web-search and are evidently quite colloquial. Examples like these are never mentioned in grammars or textbooks of the language, though the speakers I have consulted with accept them (with some surprise) as grammatical.

How can we account for the different forms of the negative existential sentences seen above? One possible way to describe the contrasts is to say that they involve a type of phrasal blocking (see, e.g., Andrews 1990; Poser 1992; Bresnan 2001; Kiparsky 2005). Informally speaking, we can say that the ungrammatical phrasal expression *hindi may(roon)* in (29) is 'blocked' by the single word form *wala*, which expresses an equivalent meaning.<sup>14</sup>

Now, given the analysis in which *mayroon* is syntactically decomposed, the question naturally arises as to what *wala* actually blocks. A possibility that arises under the decomposition approach, and crucially only under this approach, is that *wala* blocks just the analytic expression of negation and *may* but has no effect on the *roon*. According to this analysis, either of the structures on the left hand side of the arrow

<sup>14</sup>Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing me in the direction of thinking about this analysis of negative existential sentences. Although the discussion of blocking in this section is formalized along the lines of a Poser style analysis, this is more for the purposes of exposition, and I do not actually intend this to be taken as advocating a particular theoretical view of blocking phenomena more generally. See Embick and Marantz (2008) for discussion of the issues, and for alternative formulations of blocking phenomena that would be equally well suited to this discussion.



in (32a) or (32b) will be blocked in favor of the structures on the right, which employ the synthetic expression of negation and *may* (namely, *wala*). (Note, I assume here that negation canonically occurs in the position of the inflectional T(ense) head of the clause.)<sup>15</sup>

- (32) a. [TP NEG [VP may DP]]                    ⇔ [TP wala DP]  
 b. [TP NEG [VP may [XP roon DP]]]           ⇔ [TP wala [XP roon DP]]

The option in (32b) is the crucial one here, as it is the one that accounts for the form of the negative existential sentences in (31). If *mayroon* were not syntactically complex as I have proposed, on the other hand, then this option would be expected to be unavailable. In other words, if *mayroon* were unanalyzable (or even morphologically complex but formed pre-syntactically), then, given that *may* would not be treated as an independent lexical item, no blocking effect could be said to apply since there would be no analytic expression consisting of negation and *may* to block.

Negative existential sentences, then, provide a second argument for a decompositional approach to *mayroon* and *magkaroon*.

#### 4.3 Against the small clause analysis

Having now made the case for an analysis of *mayroon* and *magkaroon* as morphologically and syntactically complex, I turn now to the task of arguing for the *vP*-analysis in (21) over the small clause analysis in (20). The main argument concerns selection. Concretely, under the small clause analysis in (20), *may* and *magka* do not stand in a local enough structural relation (namely, sisterhood) to the predicate position of the small clause to impose specific lexical restrictions on what the content of this predicate position can be. This turns out to be problematic for the small clause analysis, however, since—as will become clear in what follows—there is no other lexical or phrasal category besides *roon* that could be said to function as a small clause predicate. To make the small clause analysis work, in other words, *may* and *magka* must be able to impose a specific I(exical)-selection restriction to ensure that their complement is headed by *roon* and no other element. However, since I-selection always involves a local relation between a head, X, and the head of X's complement, there is no way to state this requirement under the small clause analysis given that it is not the small clause predicate but rather the small clause itself that *may* and *magka* would be

<sup>15</sup>Drawing upon Hankamer and Mikkelsen's (2005) analysis of blocking effects relating to definiteness marking in Danish and Swedish, we can execute the proposal of the main text more formally by assuming a lexical rule of the sort given in (i):

(i) ⟨PFORM: MAY, CAT: V⟩ ⇒ ⟨PFORM: WALA, CAT: T, NEG: +⟩

When the lexical item for *wala* is chosen, it will produce the synthetic structures on the right-hand side of the arrows in (32), trumping the structures on the left-hand side of the arrows in which *hindi* is inserted into T having a complement headed by *may*.

It should be noted here that the notion of blocking that I have in mind is related but not identical to that of Poser (1992). For Poser, words can only block phrases (i.e., constituents). On the analysis I am presenting here, however, negation and *may* do not form a single constituent (see, e.g., Embick and Marantz 2008: 43).

selecting for.<sup>16</sup> By contrast, no comparable problem arises for the *vP*-analysis in (21). In particular, no problem arises under this analysis because *roon* heads the VP that *may* and *magka* (=v) select as their sister, and both items therefore stand in the right structural configuration to allow for them to l-select the head of their complement.

The strength of this argument depends, of course, on the correctness of the assertion that “no other lexical or phrasal category besides *roon* can occupy the small clause’s predicate position”. As a potential counterexample to this argument, one might point out the existential sentences in (33), in which *roon* is absent but the pivot is followed by a one of a range of categories (PP in (33a), AP in (33b), and VP in (33c); see also the examples in (3) in Sect. 3).

- (33) a. May marami-ng aklat at magasin [PP sa hapag].  
 exist many-LK book and magazine LOC dining.table  
 ‘There are many books and magazines on the dining-table.’
- b. May mga bata-ng [AP maysakit].  
 exist PL child-LK sick  
 ‘There are many sick children.’
- c. May mga iba’t iba-ng serbisyo na [VP makakatulog sa  
 exist PL other.and other-LK service LK AGR.ASP.able.help OBL  
 iyo] upang ...  
 2SG(OBL) with  
 ‘There are other services that can help you with ...’ (MB)

Given the small clause analysis, it may be tempting to analyze the bracketed material following the pivot in these examples as functioning as the small clause’s predicate in place of *roon* in the structure in (20) above. If this were correct, then the argument against the small clause analysis based on l-selection of *roon* would be diffused. Concretely, given that *may* and the small clause’s predicate are not in a local enough structural relationship to allow l-selection, we expect (all else being equal) that the predicate position of the small clause selected by *may* could be freely instantiated by a range of categories and not just a single lexical item such as *roon*.<sup>17</sup> Do

<sup>16</sup>This argument is independent of the representation of the small clause. Even if it were supposed, following Hornstein and Lightfoot (1987), Hoekstra and Mulder (1990) among others, that small clauses are projected from a functional head as in (i), the predicate of the small clause would still not be local enough for *may* or *magka* to impose an l-selection requirement.

(i) [<sub>VP</sub> *may/magka* [<sub>FP</sub> DP [<sub>F'</sub> F [<sub>XP</sub> *roon*]]]]

<sup>17</sup>In fact, the strength of existing analyses for other languages of existential sentences in which a small clause predicate headed by some form of a ‘there’-pronoun is selected by a (usually copula) verb is that the ‘there’-pronoun is in complementary distribution with other categories that can function as the predicate of the small clause. McCloskey (2006), for instance, argues that *ann* ‘there, in it’ in the Irish existential sentence in (i) functions as the predicate of a small clause.

(i) Beidh [SC go leor bia ann].  
 be.[FUT] plenty food in-it  
 ‘There’s plenty of food.’

Among the other arguments McCloskey gives for his analysis of *ann* as a small clause predicate, he observes that *ann* is “in complementary distribution with other predicates” (McCloskey 2006, 5). The

the examples in (33) bear out this prediction? For various reasons to be elucidated in what follows, the answer to this question seems to be negative.

First, one aspect of this approach that can be immediately dismissed as incorrect is the claim that the bracketed material in the examples in (33) takes the place of *roon* as the small clause predicate. Concretely, these sentences remain perfectly grammatical when *may* is immediately followed by *roon*, which proves that the *roon* and the bracketed material are not, in fact, in complementary distribution after all (see also the examples in (4) in Section 3). Now, while this fact is problematic for the specific version of the small clause analysis that we have been considering so far, it is not quite so problematic for the small clause analysis in general. One might, for instance, consider abandoning the initial assumption upon which the small clause analysis in (20) was based—namely, the assumption that *roon* is the (default) predicate of the small clause. In particular, one might reject the decompositional analysis of *mayroon* and assume instead (contra the arguments presented in Section 4.2) that there are two distinct lexical items, *may* and *mayroon*, both of which select for a small clause complement. If so, this leaves only the material following the pivot in examples like (33) as a possible instantiation of a small clause predicate (and hence, as an argument for the presence of a small clause structure more generally). I devote the next subsections to arguing that this possibility, too, is incorrect. In particular, I will show the material following the nominal pivot in examples like (33) cannot be analyzed as the content of the predicate position of a small clause, but rather that it is either (i) adjoined to the predicate phrase as a modifier (as in the case of the locative PP in examples like (33a)) or (ii) adjoined to the pivot as a relative clause modifier (as in the case of examples like (33b-c) and the like).

#### 4.3.1 *The locative PP is not a small clause predicate*

Consider first examples like (33a) above, in which the nominal pivot is followed by a PP. If the existential predicate selects a small clause complement, then an obvious analysis of this sentence would be one in which the PP is treated as the predicate of the small clause. There is, however, a language specific reason for rejecting this analysis. Concretely, locative phrases that function as predicates in Tagalog must be inflected with the prefix *na*. This is illustrated by the examples in (34), where a locative phrase serves as the main predicate of a clause.

- (34) \*(Na)sa kati sila nang dumaan ang bagyo.  
 PRED.LOC shore 3PL(S) when AGR.ASP.hit S storm  
 ‘They were onshore when the storm hit.’ (LE 318)

contrast between the examples in (ii) (McCloskey’s) illustrates:

- (ii) a. Tá daoine sa teach.  
 be.[PRES] people in-the house  
 ‘There are people in the house.’  
 b. \*Tá daoine *am* sa teach.  
 be [PRES] people in-it in-the house  
 ‘There are people in the house.’

By contrast, a locative that functions as an argument (as in (35)) or as an adjunct (as in (36)) never surfaces with this inflection.

- (35) Naupo' siya (\*na)sa kandungan ng kanya-ng ina.  
 AGR.ASP.sit 3SG(S) PRED.LOC lap NS 3SG(OBL)-LK mother  
 'He sat on his mother's lap.'
- (36) Kumakain siya (\*na)sa iskwela.  
 AGR.ASP.eat 3SG(S) PRED.LOC school  
 'He eats at school.'

Given these observations, observe now that the locative phrase that appears in existential constructions patterns with locative arguments/adjuncts rather than with locative predicates. Notice in particular that it is ungrammatical for the locative PP in an existential sentence to be inflected with *na*.

- (37) May malaki-ng disyerto (\*na)sa Australya.  
 exist big-LK desert PRED.LOC Australia  
 'There is a big desert in Australia.'

The only way to render (37) grammatical with the predicate locative inflection is to add a linker following the pivot as shown in (38).

- (38) May malaki-ng disyerto-ng nasa Australya.  
 exist big-LK desert-LK PRED.LOC Australia  
 'There is a big desert that is in Australia.'

The presence of the linker in this example is a strong initial indicator that the locative phrase is syntactically a modifier of the pivot—in particular, that it is a (restrictive) relative clause adjoined to the nominal pivot. Note that a relative clause analysis is plausible here by virtue of the fact that simple (and unambiguous) relative clauses in Tagalog consist of a string of elements identical to that which follows *may* in (38) (in particular, a noun phrase, followed by a linker, followed by a predicative constituent). Consider the examples in (39), which both contain noun phrase subjects with an adjoined (restrictive) relative clause modifier.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Relative clauses in Tagalog can also have a more articulated structure involving the [+wh] complementizer, *kung*, followed by an overt *Wh*-phrase operator.

- (i) Pumunta ako [sa tindahan [kung saan n-agtatrabaho si Maria *t*]].  
 AGR.ASP.go 1SG(S) LOC store REL where AGR.ASP-work S Maria  
 'I went to the store where Maria works.'

Relative clauses of this type, as far as I can tell, are not ambiguous with any parse other than that of a relative clause. Thus, the material following the pivot of existential sentences such as those in (ii–iii) is also unambiguously a relative clause modifier of the pivot.

- (ii) May [mga support group sa Melbourne [kung saan  
 exist PL support group LOC Melbourne REL where  
 nagsa-sama-sama ang mga tao-ng maysakit na kanser *t*]].  
 AGR.ASP-be.together S PL people-LK sick LK kanser  
 'There are support groups where people who are sick with cancer get together.'

- (39) a. *Minamahal ni Juan [ang bata-ng [Op in-iligtas niya  
ASP.love-AGR NS Juan S child-LK ASP-rescue-AGR 3SG(NS)  
t ]].*  
'Juan loves the child who he rescued.'
- b. *Maysakit [ang bata-ng [Op umiiyak t ]].*  
sick S child-LK AGR.ASP.cry  
'The child who is crying is sick.'

Positive support for the claim that *nasa Australya* is indeed a restrictive relative clause modifier in (38) is based on stacked relative clauses consisting of a restrictive and a non-restrictive relative clause.<sup>19</sup> Specifically, non-restrictive relative clauses differ from restrictive relative clauses in Tagalog in that the former are set off from the noun phrase which they modify by a noticeable intonational pause. Related to this, a non-restrictive relative clause is invariably introduced by the linker *na*, even when the preceding word ends in a vowel or nasal consonant (i.e., the conditions that would trigger the *-ng* allomorph of the linker (Schachter and Otnes 1972: 131–132)). Important for our immediate purposes is the observation that it is possible to have stacked relative clauses consisting of a restrictive relative clause followed by a non-restrictive relative clause. Consider (40).

- (40) *Nakita ko ang tao-ng n-agnakaw ng kotse mo, na  
AGR.ASP.see 1SG(NS) S man-LK AGR.ASP-steal NS car 2SG(NS) LK  
in-isip ko-ng n-agnakaw din ng kotse ko.  
ASP-think-AGR 1SG(NS)-COMP AGR.ASP-steal also NS car 1SG(NS).  
'I saw the guy who stole your car, who I think also stole my car.'*

Significantly, the order in which the restrictive relative clause and the non-restrictive relative clause occur is fixed. The non-restrictive relative clause must follow the restrictive one. The reverse order is impossible as demonstrated by the ungrammaticality of (41).

- (41) \**Nakita ko ang tao, na in-isip ko-ng  
AGR.ASP.see 1SG(NS) S man LK ASP-thing-AGR 1SG(NS)-COMP  
n-agnakaw ng kotse ko-ng n-agnakaw ng kotse mo.  
AGR.ASP-steal NS car 1SG(NS)-LK AGR.ASP-steal NS car 2SG(NS)  
'I saw the guy, who I think stole my car, that stole your car.'*

(iii) *May [ila-ng mga dahilan [kung bakit atrasado  
exist some-LK PL reason REL why late  
ang mga bayad t]].*  
S PL payment  
'There are a few reasons why the payments are late.' (ITS)

Such existential sentences are therefore not amenable to a small clause analysis in which the material to the right of the pivot is a small clause predicate. Rather, given the absence of *roon* or any constituent following the relative clause, these sentences would have to be analyzed as a small clause structure with a complex DP subject and a null small clause predicate.

<sup>19</sup>I thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting the line of argumentation presented here.

Returning to the existential sentence in (38), if *nasa Australia* is indeed a restrictive relative clause which modifies the pivot, then we expect to observe the same ordering restriction relating to restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses that we just saw in connection with the contrast between (40) and (41). This prediction is borne out. In (42), *nasa Australia* is followed by a non-restrictive relative clause.

- (42) May malaki-ng disyerto-ng nasa Australia, na pinaka-mainit sa  
 exist big-LK desert-LK PRED.LOC Austrlia LK most-hot LOC  
 buo-ng mundo.  
 whole-LK world  
 ‘There’s a big desert in Australia, which is the hottest in the world.’

Placing the restrictive relative clause after the non-restrictive *nasa Australia* is impossible.

- (43) \*May malaki-ng disyerto, na pinaka-mainint sa buo-ng mundo-ng  
 exist big-LK desert LK most-hot LOC whole-LK world-LK  
 nasa Australia.  
 PRED.LOC Australia  
 ‘There’s a big desert, which is the hottest in the whole world, in Australia.’

The ungrammaticality of (43) therefore offers compelling evidence that *nasa Australia* in (38) is indeed a restrictive relative clause modifier of the nominal pivot, and hence not the predicate of a small clause.

To summarize: The possibility that simple PP locative phrases following the pivot which are not inflected as predicate locatives (as in (33a)) function as small clause predicates is undermined by negative evidence showing that such locative phrase do not exhibit a morphosyntax consistent with their function as locative predicates.<sup>20</sup> Rather, uninflected locative PPs exhibit the morphosyntax of adjuncts. Furthermore,

<sup>20</sup>Argument and adverbial locatives behave differently from predicate locatives in one other way as well. Concretely, argument and adverbial locatives may be preposed to a left-peripheral position of the clause (as shown in (i)), while predicate locatives (and predicates more generally) cannot, as shown by the contrast between (ii) and (iii).

- (i) Doon ay i-pinagbili niya ang kalabaw niya.  
 there INV AGR-ASP.sell 3SG(NS) S carabaw 3SG(NS)  
 ‘He sold his carabaw in Manila.’ (Schachter and Otnes 1972: 488)
- (ii) Sabih-in ko-ng [naron si Juan].  
 say-AGR 1SG(NS)-COMP PRED.there S Juan  
 ‘I said that Juan was there.’
- (iii) \*Naron ay sabih-in ko-ng [ \_\_\_ si Juan].  
 PRED.there INV say-AGR 1SG(NS)-COMP S Juan  
 ‘I said that Juan was there.’

Relevantly, the locative in existential sentences patterns with argument and adverbial locatives in the ability to prepose, as shown in (iv).

- (iv) Sa Australia ay mayroo-ng malaking disyerto.  
 LOC Australia INV exist.there-LK big-LK desert  
 ‘There is a big desert in Australia.’

the likelihood that PP locative phrases that follow the pivot which are appropriately inflected as locative predicates function as small clauses is undermined by syntactic evidence supporting an analysis of such constituents as restrictive relative clause modifiers of the nominal pivot.

#### 4.3.2 *The VP is not a small clause predicate*

Having now excluded the possibility that either inflected locative PPs or uninflected locative PPs which follow the pivot function as the predicate of a small clause, I now turn to the evidence that shows that VP material which follows the pivot (e.g., as in examples like (33c)) also does not function as a small clause predicate. Rather, the evidence to be presented establishes that VP material which may follow the pivot is unambiguously merged with the nominal pivot as a relative clause modifier.

4.3.2.1 *Extraction* Extraction of an adjunct (e.g., a locative phrase) is possible out of simple matrix clauses ((44)), from an embedded non-finite clause ((45)), and from an embedded finite clause ((46)).<sup>21</sup>

- (44) Saan ka kumain *t*?  
 where 2SG(S) AGR.ASP.eat  
 ‘Where did you eat?’
- (45) Saan mo gusto [ -ng kumain *t*]?  
 where 2SG(NS) want -LK AGR.INF.eat  
 ‘Where do you want to eat?’
- (46) Saan sinabi ni Pedro [ -ng bumili siya ng laruan *t*]?  
 where AGR.ASP.say NS Pedro -LK AGR.ASP.buy 3SG(s) NS toy  
 ‘Where did Pedro say that he bought the toy?’

Unsurprisingly, extraction of an adjunct out of a relative clause is impossible.

- (47) \*Saan minamahal ni Juan [ ang bata-ng [ *Op* in-iligtas  
 where ASP.love-AGR NS Juan S child-LK ASP-rescue-AGR  
 niya *t* ]]?  
 3SG(NS)  
 ‘Where does Juan love the child who he rescued?’

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These observations provide additional support for the conclusion that the locative PP in existential sentences is not a small clause predicate.

<sup>21</sup>I use extraction of adjuncts rather than extraction of ‘core’ arguments (e.g., subjects or objects) to illustrate island effects in order to avoid interference relating to the “Subject-only” restriction on extraction. In particular, an extracted element must usually correspond to the subject of the clause in Tagalog—namely, the argument that agrees with the predicate and which corresponds to the argument that is marked with *ang* or *si* in non-extraction environments. Oblique arguments and adjuncts (to the extent these can be distinguished in Tagalog) are the exception to this restriction—i.e., they may generally be extracted without first being promoted to subject. Given this, we can be reasonably sure that the island facts discussed in the main text are not an artifact of the “Subject-only” restriction.

Given this observation, it is significant that VP material following the pivot of an existential sentence behaves like an island for extraction. The ungrammaticality of the following examples illustrates.

- (48) a. \*Saan mayroo-ng bata-ng [VP in-iligtas ni Juan *t*]?  
 where exist.there-LK child-LK ASP.rescue-AGR NS Juan  
 ‘Where is there a child who [Juan rescued *t*]?’  
 b. \*Bakit mayroo-ng bata-ng [VP in-iligtas ni Juan *t*]?  
 why exist.there-LK child-LK ASP.rescue-AGR NS Juan  
 ‘Why is there a child who [Juan rescued *t*]?’

The ungrammaticality of these examples follows straightforwardly if the VP that follows the pivot is unambiguously a relative clause modifier merged with the pivot. In fact, the ungrammaticality of the examples in (48) makes the even stronger point that there is no analysis in which the VP that follows the pivot is parsed as the predicate of a small clause. If such a parse were available, in other words, then we would expect it to be possible to obviate the islandhood of the VP following the pivot, in which case the examples in (48) should be grammatical on par with the examples in (44–46).<sup>22</sup> The facts clearly do not support such a possibility.

**4.3.2.2 Second position pronouns** An argument similar to the one above can be made on the basis of second position pronouns. Subject and non-subject pronouns in Tagalog typically appear in second position of the immediate clause (=TP) in which they originate (Schachter and Otnes 1972; Sityar 1989; Kroeger 1993). For Tagalog, second position may be defined either as following the first phrasal constituent in the clause or immediately following the first prosodic word. The examples in (49)

<sup>22</sup>Another analysis that is compatible with these observations is that the coda is a modifier of the predicate phrase headed by the existential predicate (see, e.g., McNally 1992, who argues that *sleeping* is a VP modifier in sentences like *There were children sleeping* in English). Under this analysis, the ungrammaticality of extraction from the material following the pivot could be attributed to the adjunct-island condition. Morpho-syntactically, however, clausal adverbs in Tagalog behave differently than relative clauses. For instance, they are generally introduced by prepositions that denote the semantic relation of the adverb to the rest of the sentence (e.g., *nang* for certain temporal clauses, *kung* for conditional clauses, *bagama’t* for concessive clauses). Furthermore, adjuncts in Tagalog may be preposed, as shown in (i).

- (i) Buhat sa malayo ay ma-tatanaw mo ang dagat-dagatan.  
 from OBL distance INV AGR.ASP.able-see 2SG(NS) S lake  
 ‘From a distance, you can see the lake.’ (LE 385)  
 (ii) Kung mabuti ang ani ’y makakabili ako ng tractor.  
 if good S harvest INV AGR.ASP.buy 1SG(s) NS tractor  
 ‘If the harvest is good, I’ll buy a tractor.’ (Schachter and Otnes 1972: 489)

The material following the nominal pivot in an existential sentence, by contrast, cannot be preposed.

- (ii) \*Na in-iligtas ni Juan ay mayroon-ng bata.  
 LK ASP-rescue-AGR NS Juan INV exist.there-LK child  
 ‘There’s a child who Juan rescued.’

These facts strongly suggest that the material following the pivot in existential sentences is not an adjunct. On the other hand, if positive evidence were to emerge showing that this material is an adjunct rather than a relative clause modifier of the pivot, this would not effect the main conclusion of this section that the material does not function as a small clause predicate.



illustrate. In (49a), the pronoun surfaces to the left of the NP predicate of the clause. In (49b), the pronoun surfaces to the immediate right of the AP modifier that is left adjoined to the NP predicate.

- (49) a. Masama-ng bata siya.  
 bad-LK child 3SG(S)  
 ‘He’s a bad child.’  
 b. Mabuti siya-ng ama para sa mga anak.  
 good 3SG(S)-LK father for OBL PL child  
 ‘He’s a good father to the children.’

In general, when a pronoun surfaces farther to the right than either the first XP or the first prosodic word of the clause, as in the example in (50), the result is marginal at best.

- (50) ??Mabuti-ng ama para sa mga anak siya.  
 good-LK father for OBL PL child 3SG(S)  
 ‘He’s a good father to the children.’

The example in (51) shows that a pronoun that originates as an argument of an embedded finite clause must surface within the embedded clause, and cannot surface in second position within the matrix clause.

- (51) *Sinabi* (\*niya) ni Dumarpa sa isa-ng panayam na  
 ASP.say-AGR 3SG(NS) NS Dumarpa OBL one-LK interview COMP  
 [TP[+fin] *ila-ng beses* niya-ng *tinanong ang* *ila-ng waiter*  
 some-LK time 3SG(NS)-LK ASP.ask-AGR S some-LK waiter  
*kung mayroo-ng baboy ang pansit*].  
 COMP exist.there-LK pork S noodle  
 ‘Dumarpa said in an interview that she’ll sometimes ask a waiter if there is  
 pork in the soup (lit. if the soup has pork).’ (*Web: Petition spot.com, 2006*)

One apparent exception to the generalization that a pronoun obligatorily appears in second position within the first clause (=TP) in which it is an argument involves restructuring contexts. Verbs such as *gusto* ‘want’ and *kaya* ‘able’ and perhaps many others allow optional restructuring of their embedded complement clause (Schachter and Otanes 1972: 266; Kroeger 1993: 167–207; Mercado 2001). One indication of restructuring, observable in (52b) below, is that the (non-subject) external argument of the restructuring predicate may appear (via some type of scrambling process) within the embedded clause. Significantly for us, a pronominal argument that is selected within the embedded clause can (and, for some speakers, must) appear adjacent to the matrix predicate when restructuring occurs.

- (52) **Unrestructured clause**  
 a. Hindi kaya ni Predo [-ng utus-an siya].  
 not able NS Pedro -LK ASP.order-AGR 3SG(S)  
 ‘Pedro can’t order her around.’

**Restructured clause**

- b. Hindi siya kaya [ -ng utusa-an ni Pedro \_\_\_\_ ].  
 not 3SG(S) able -LK ASP.order-AGR NS Pedro  
 ‘Pedro can’t order her around.’

According to Kroeger (1993), the reason why restructuring makes it possible for a pronoun in an embedded clause to appear adjacent to the matrix restructuring predicate is that the embedded clause in a restructuring environment is not actually a full clause at all, but rather something more minimal. For Kroeger, this more minimal constituent is “S”, a clause-like constituent that contrasts with full clauses which are projected from I(nf)/T(ense). Since the embedded clause is not a full clause, it is the matrix clause projected from the restructuring predicate that constitutes the immediate clause (i.e., TP) in which the second position pronoun is contained and, therefore, the minimal clause in which the pronoun must appear in second position.

Suppose this analysis to be basically correct. Now, consider the structure of existential sentences that we are interested in, in which the complement of the existential predicate is a small clause and the VP material that follows the pivot instantiates the predicate of this small clause. Since a small clause presumably does not introduce a clausal boundary (i.e., a projection of TP or anything larger), the prediction is that a pronoun which originates within the VP constituent following the pivot—i.e., contained within the hypothesized predicate of the small clause—should be able to surface outside of this constituent, namely, to the immediate right of the existential predicate *mayroon*. This prediction is not borne out. Observe, for instance, that the pronoun surfaces within the constituent following the pivot in (53a), but surfaces to the immediate right of the existential predicate in (53b). In the latter case, the result is ungrammatical.<sup>23</sup>

- (53) a. Mayroo-ng lalaki-ng maysakit na [<sub>VP</sub> bibisitah-in niya].  
 exist.there-LK man-LK sick LK ASP.visit-AGR 3SG(NS)  
 ‘There is a sick man who he visits.’
- b. \*Mayroon niya-ng lalaki-ng maysakit na [<sub>VP</sub> bibisitah-in \_\_\_\_ ].  
 exist.there 3SG(NS)-LK man-LK sick LK ASP.visit-AGR  
 ‘There is a sick man who he visits.’

The fact that (53b) is ungrammatical follows straightforwardly if the VP which follows the pivot is unambiguously a relative clause modifying the pivot. In particular, and as one might expect at this point, a pronoun that originates within an unambiguous relative clause is systematically incapable of surfacing outside of the relative clause. The example in (54) demonstrates this fact. (Note that (54) with the pronoun outside of the relative clause is ungrammatical regardless of whether the pronoun is coreferential with the subject or not.)

<sup>23</sup>Example (53b) 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, and the sentence therefore means something more like “He has a sick child (e.g., his son) who he visits.” In this case, then, the pronoun is an argument of the existential predicate and not an argument of the predicate occurring contained within the coda.

- (54) *Humalik* (\**niya*) si Juan ng [<sub>NP</sub> babae [<sub>CP</sub> -ng in-iligtas  
 AGR.ASP.kiss 3SG(NS) S Juan NS woman -LK ASP-rescue-AGR  
*niya* ]].  
 3SG(NS)  
 ‘Juan kissed a woman who he rescued.’

This observation parallels the observation based on extraction discussed in the preceding subsection. Crucially, it makes the same point that the VP material following the pivot in an existential sentence is unambiguously a relative clause modifier of the pivot and, therefore, not the predicate of a small clause.

**4.3.2.3 Aspect** In all of the examples that we have considered up to this point, the verbal predicate that occurs to the right of the pivot is inflected for aspect. In fact, this verbal predicate may inflect for all of the relevant aspects that Tagalog allows for (Imperfective, Perfective, and Contemplative). The examples in (55), which have the aspect of the verb explicitly glossed, illustrate.

- (55) a. *Mayroo-ng mga bata-ng n-agsasalita ng mga*  
 exist.there-LK PL child-LK AGR[IMPERF]-speak NS PL  
*wikang hindi Ingles sa bahay.*  
 language-LK not English LOC house  
 ‘There are children who speak languages that aren’t English in the house.’
- b. *Mayroon-ng marami-ng tao-ng kumontra sa mga*  
 exist.there-LK many-LK person-LK AGR[PERF].oppose OBL PL  
*sinabi ni Bush.*  
 ASP.say-AGR NS Bush  
 ‘There were many people who opposed the things Bush said.’
- c. *Mayroo-ng mga bata-ng m-agaaral.*  
 exist.there-LK PL child-LK AGR[CONT]-study  
 ‘There are children who are not going to study.’

Crucially, the verbal predicate must inflect for aspect. As the ungrammaticality of (56) demonstrates, it is not possible for the predicate to appear in an uninflected (infinitive) form.

- (56) \**Mayroo-ng mga bata-ng m-agaral.*  
 exist.there-LK PL child-LK AGR[INF].study  
 ‘There are children studying.’

This fact, like all the others, follows straightforwardly if the VP material following the pivot is always merged with the pivot as a relative clause modifier. Since the relative clause contains a full clausal projection (CP) and, furthermore, because this clause is not selected by any higher predicate that would require the verb to be non-finite (e.g., an auxiliary or a control verb), the obligatory realization of aspect follows from the same principle that requires all (unselected) verbal predicates to bear aspect.

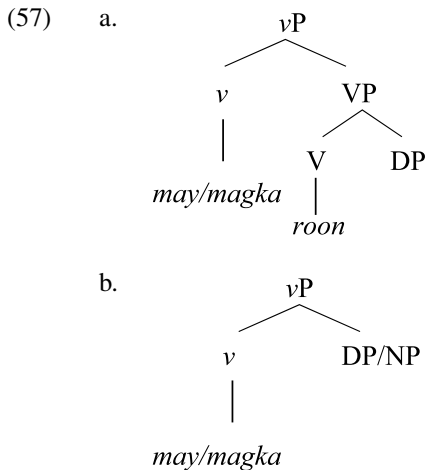
It is much less clear why (56) should be ungrammatical if there were a parse of this sentence in which the existential verb selects a small clause complement and

the VP following the pivot instantiated the predicate position of this small clause. In particular, it is virtually a defining property of small clauses that their predicate lacks inflection for tense and aspect (this usually being dependent on the tense and aspect values of the matrix predicate that selects the small clause—see, in particular, Gueron and Hoekstra (1994)). This property of small clauses is usually attributed to the absence of an independent projection of a Tense/Aspect inflectional head within the small clause structure (Williams 1975; Stowell 1981, 1983; among others).

We can conclude once again that there is no parse for complex existential sentences in which the VP following the pivot is a small clause predicate.

#### 4.4 Interim summary

We have argued thus far as follows. Existential sentences in Tagalog are a type of impersonal construction with no overt subject. The sole noun phrase argument (i.e., the pivot) of an existential sentence is structurally the complement (direct object) of the existential predicates *may(roon)* and *magka(roon)*. In terms of the decompositional analysis of these predicates presented in Sect. 4.2, this can be stated more concretely as the pivot being a complement either of the VP projection headed by *roon* which is selected, in turn, by the functional head, *v*, instantiated by the items *may/magka*. This is illustrated in (57a). Alternatively, the pivot is the direct complement of this functional head as illustrated in (57b).



It has been argued that this analysis fares much better than an alternative small clause approach to existential sentences. While it may not be possible to rule out the small clause approach completely, the discussion above should have made it clear that there is no positive evidence for such an approach. Concretely, positive support for the small clause analysis would have to come from identifying some word, morpheme, or phrase that might function as the predicate of a small clause. We have seen that there is no positive evidence supporting the existence of such an item, which leads me to reject the small clause analysis for Tagalog existential sentences in favor of the analysis in (57).

## 5 The syntax and semantics of existential sentences

### 5.1 The definiteness effect

Like existential constructions in many other languages, the nominal pivot in Tagalog existential sentences exhibits a definiteness effect. In all of the examples cited so far, the pivot has been preceded either by an overt indefinite determiner or not preceded by a determiner at all, in which case, it is interpreted as a simple indefinite.

Noun phrases that are headed by a strong quantifier cannot serve as the pivot of an existential sentence.<sup>24</sup>

- (58) a. \*May(roo-ng) lahat sa bahay.  
 exist.there-LK all LOC house  
 ‘There is everyone in the house.’  
 b. \*May(roo-ng) bawa’t (isa-ng) babae sa bahay.  
 exist.there-LK every one-LK woman LOC house  
 ‘There is each woman/each of the women in the house.’  
 c. \*May(roo-ng) karamiha-ng tao sa bahay.  
 exist.there-LK most-LK person LOC house  
 ‘There were most of the people at the house.’

Gaps of extracted *Wh*-phrases may occur in the position of the pivot, though a distinction is made between *Wh*-phrases like *ano* ‘what’ and *sino* ‘who’. The former may bind a gap occurring in the pivot position, but the latter cannot.

- (59) a. [Ano ang [*Op* may(ron) *t*]] sa bahay ni Juan?  
 what S exist.there LOC house NS Juan  
 ‘What is there in Juan’s house?’  
 b. Kung gusto mo malaman kung [ano ang  
 if want 2SG(NS) AGR.INF.know COMP what S  
 [*Op* may(ron) *t*]], m-agtanong lang.  
 exist.there AGR.INF-ask just  
 ‘If you want to know what there is, just ask.’  
 (60) \*[Sino ang [*Op* may(ron) *t*]] sa bahay?  
 who S exist.there LOC house  
 ‘Who is there in the house?’

Evidently, then, *ano* ‘what’ counts as indefinite, while *sino* ‘who’ qualifies as definite in Tagalog. I return to this difference below.

The definiteness effect also systematically excludes pronouns (as in (61)) and proper names (as in (62)) from occurring in the pivot position of existential sentences. This restriction seems firm enough that such noun phrases are not even possible when they occur in the special “list-contexts” described by Milsark (1974) (see also, Zucchi 1995; and Ward and Birner 1995).

<sup>24</sup>While I only present examples of existential sentences with *may(ron)* to illustrate the definiteness effect, it should be noted that the same facts obtain for existential sentences formed with *magka(ron)* as well.

- (61) \*May(roo-ng) siya/niya sa bahay.  
 exist.there-LK 3SG(S)/3SG(NS) LOC house  
 ‘There was him in the house.’
- (62) \*May(roo-ng) (si/ni) Pablo sa handaan ko.  
 exist.there-LK S/NS Pablo LOC party 1SG(ns)  
 ‘There was Pablo at my party.’

One apparent exception to this aspect of the definiteness effect involves the pronoun *nito* ‘this’. However, whenever this pronoun appears in existential sentences it is interpreted as an indefinite partitive (Schachter and Otones 1972: 275–280).

- (63) Mayroon nito roon.  
 exist.there this there  
 ‘There’s some of this there.’

Indefinite partitives seem to be licit as the pivot of an existential sentence more generally, as the examples in (64) show.

- (64) a. Mayroo-ng ilan sa inyo na hindi sumusampalatya.  
 exist.there-LK some OBL 2PL(OBL) LK not AGR.ASP.believe  
 ‘There are some of you who don’t believe.’ (TB)
- b. May ilan sa mga tao na maysakit na kanser na wala-ng  
 exist some OBL PL person LK sick LK cancer LK not.exist-LK  
 lunas ...  
 remedy  
 ‘There are some of the people who have cancer who don’t have a remedy.’ (KH)

Finally, noun phrases which contain a demonstrative are usually rejected as pivots. In contrast with pronouns and proper names, however, this effect can evidently be overridden in “list contexts”, as shown in (65).

- (65) At mayroo-ng ito-ng yaya na Liway Perez ang pangalan.  
 and exist.there-LK this-LK nursemaid LK Liway Perez S name  
 ‘And there is this nursemaid whose name is Liway Perez.’ (MP)

## 5.2 Accounting for the definiteness effect

The question of what explains the definiteness effect has occupied research on existential sentences for quite some time, and there has been no short supply of answers to this question. It is far beyond the scope of this article to survey all of the proposals that have been made. Rather, the analysis that I would like to consider here is one in which the definiteness restriction follows from the requirement that the existential predicate’s argument (=the pivot) must be property denoting—i.e., that it must correspond to an object with the semantic type  $\langle\langle e,t \rangle\rangle$  denoting a set of individuals or—equivalently—a property over individuals (see, in particular, McNally 1992; Musan 1996; Dobrovie-Sorin 1997; van Geenhoven 1998; and Chung and Ladusaw 2004).

Following Heim (1982), suppose that indefinites denote properties—i.e., that they have the semantic type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ . Given this, all of the examples in which the pivot of the existential is indefinite satisfy the requirement that the pivot of an existential sentence be a property denoting object. If we further assume that indefinite partitive phrases, like those in (64), are property denoting as well (McNally 1998: 19; fn. 24), then the fact that these examples are well formed follows as well.

The ungrammaticality of the examples in (58) can be accounted for on the standard assumption that noun phrases which are headed by quantifiers such as *all*, *each*, and *most* denote generalized quantifiers rather than properties (they are semantically type  $\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$ ). Assuming this, the requirement that the pivot be property denoting cannot be satisfied by the universally quantified noun phrases in (58). The ungrammaticality of examples like (61) and (62) also follows on the fairly standard assumption that pronouns and proper names denote individuals rather than properties—i.e., they are semantically of type *e*.

The more difficult case to deal with centers around the contrast between the examples in (59) on the one hand, and (60) on the other. This contrast can be made sense of if we suppose, first of all, that the trace of a moved *Wh*-phrase is translated as a variable at LF. Suppose, in addition, that such variables, like pronouns, are semantically of type *e*. This assumption will rule out examples like (60), since the trace of the moved *Wh*-phrase—namely, *sino* ‘who’—occupies the position of the nominal pivot, but is not the right semantic type ( $\langle e, t \rangle$ ) to occur there.

To account for the grammaticality of the examples in (59), suppose, following Heim (1987), that *what* can be interpreted as an indefinite with the meaning ‘something of what kind’. *What*-questions can then be analyzed as involving a narrow scope occurrence of this indefinite containing a variable, ‘something of kind *x*’, with the variable bound by the moved *Wh*-operator—namely, *what*. The crucial claim here is that it is this indefinite that occurs in the pivot position. Since it is this (property denoting) indefinite expression that occurs in the pivot position, the requirement that forces the pivot to be indefinite is satisfied in the examples in (59).<sup>25</sup> In order to maintain the account of the ungrammaticality of the example in (60) stated above, we need to stipulate that the Tagalog *Wh*-word *sino*, in contrast to the *Wh*-word *ano*, does not license a kind denotation of this sort.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup>This proposal seems somewhat less abstract if we consider *Wh*-questions like (i).

- (i) *Ano ang [NP [NP uri ng pamahallan] [CP mayroon t sa Pilipinas]?*  
 what s kind of government exist.there LOC Philippines  
 ‘What kind of government is there in the Philippines?’

*Wh*-questions in Tagalog take the form of pseudo-clefts, in which the *Wh*-phrase functions as the main predicate of the clause, and the propositional content of the clause is expressed by the subject containing a relative clause whose head may be null. Notice that in (i), the overt head of the relative clause is the NP *uri ng pamahallan* ‘kind of government’. This shows that a kind-denoting NP can function as the head of a relative clause. Given the proposal in the main text, the difference between (i) and the examples in (59) relates to the presence of a covert rather than overt relative clause head analogous to that in (i).

<sup>26</sup>Safir (1985) claims the English equivalents of sentences like (60) are only slightly degraded (he assigns them a grammaticality judgment of only a single question mark). Heim (1987) therefore generalizes her analysis of *what*-questions involving indefinite kind denotations to *who*-questions, though noting that the latter may only be “marginally available”. To explain the Tagalog facts, we must assume this possibility to be completely ruled out for the language.

Finally, let us return to the issue of definite noun phrases and proper names in existential sentences. As remarked above, such noun phrases are usually ruled out, unless they occur in “list contexts”. Heim (1982) assumes that definite noun phrases, like indefinite ones, are property denoting. If we follow this assumption (as McNally 1992 does), then the requirement that the nominal pivot must be property denoting will not be sufficient to rule out examples in which a definite noun phrase occurs as the pivot of an existential sentence. McNally solves this problem by proposing a felicity condition on existential sentences which requires the pivot to introduce a novel discourse referent. I will follow McNally’s lead here and assume, then, that definite noun phrases such as those headed by demonstrative determiners like *ito* ‘this’ as in (65) can be property denoting and hence accepted in the pivot position of existential sentences as long as they satisfy the relevant felicity condition (e.g., as when they occur in “list-contexts”, see McNally 1992, 1998: 383–386 for more detailed discussion).

To summarize, given reasonable assumptions about the mapping of certain types of noun phrases onto semantic types, the requirement that the pivot of an existential sentence be property denoting correctly accounts for the distribution of different noun phrase types in Tagalog existential sentences.

### 5.3 Two outcomes

While the account of the definiteness effect provided above is hardly novel, it achieves certain analytical gains when applied to Tagalog. In particular, I aim to show in the next two subsections how the account lends itself to an insightful analysis of two properties of existential sentences—namely (i) the fact that they are impersonal and (ii) the fact that the pivot is licensed in the absence of any case inflection.

#### 5.3.1 Impersonal clause structure

First, consider the fact that existential sentences in Tagalog are impersonal constructions. Concretely, the pivot of an existential sentence must remain in-situ as the complement of the existential predicate and may never advance to become a subject.

- (66) \*Mayroon dito kahapon ang aksidente.  
 exist.there here yesterday S accident  
 ‘There was an accident here yesterday.’

This fact follows from the account of the definiteness effect presented in the previous section in conjunction with one additional observation about Tagalog subjects. Concretely, subjects in Tagalog must adhere to a requirement that has often been described as a specificity condition (see, in particular, Kroeger 1993: 14; Richards 1993; Rackowski 2003). Concretely, given that there is no definite or indefinite determiner in Tagalog analogous to English *the* and *a*, the sentences in (67) are potentially ambiguous with respect to the interpretation of the subject as definite or indefinite. Crucially, only the definite interpretation is possible.

- (67) a. N-agkampo ang mga sundalo sa may ilog.  
 AGR.ASP-camp S PL soldier LOC near river  
 ‘The/\*some soldiers camped near the river.’



- b. *Dumaan* ang parada.  
AGR.ASP.pass S parade  
'The/\*a parade passed.' (LE 381)
- c. *Hinawak-an* ni Maria ang bata.  
ASP.hold-AGR NS Maria S child  
'Maria held the/\*a child.'

The specificity condition also precludes noun phrases headed by "weak quantifiers" such as *maraming* 'many', *kaunti* 'few' and others from functioning as subjects.

- (68) a. \**N-agalok* sa akin ng bulaklak ang marami-ng bata.  
AGR.ASP-offer OBL 1SG(OBL) NS flower S many-LK child  
'Many children offered me a flower.'
- b. \**Uminom* ng kape ang kaunti-ng tao.  
AGR.ASP.drink NS coffee S few-LK person  
'Few people drank coffee.'

The impossible indefinite subject interpretations for the sentences in (67) and the meanings of the ungrammatical sentences in (68) can be expressed either by an existential sentence or by a focus construction. For instance, the ruled out reading for (67a) can be expressed by the existential sentence in (69a), and the meaning of (68b) can be expressed using the focus construction in (69b).

- (69) a. *Mayroo-ng* mga sundalo-ng n-agkampo sa may ilog.  
exist.there-LK PL soldier-LK AGR.ASP-camp LOC near river  
'There were soldiers who camped near the river.'
- b. *Kaunti* ang tao-ng uminom ng kape.  
few S person-LK AGR.ASP.drink NS coffee  
'Few people drank coffee.' (lit. The people who drank coffee were few.)

By contrast, pronouns, noun phrases containing a demonstrative, universally quantified noun phrases, and plural noun phrases that receive a generic interpretation may serve as subjects. The following examples illustrate.

- (70) a. *N-agdestino* siya ng ila-ng tauhan sa kanila-ng  
AGR.ASP-assign 3SG(S) NS some-LK personnel OBL 3PL(OBL)-LK  
sangay sa Davao.  
branch loc Davao  
'He assigned some personnel to their branch in Davao.' (LE 434)
- b. *Pagkatapos* ng klase, n-aghiwa-hiwalay sa iba't iba-ng  
after NS class AGR.ASP-scatter LOC other other-LK  
direksiyon yung mga bata.  
direction that(s) PL child  
'Those children scattered in every direction after class.'
- c. *Uminom* ng kape ang bawa't babae.  
AGR.ASP.drink NS coffee S each woman  
'Each woman drank coffee.'

- d. Mahirap makilala sa dilim ang mga kulay.  
 difficult AGR.INF.know LOC dark S PL color  
 ‘Colors are indistinguishable (lit. difficult to be known) in the dark.’ (LE 329)

Importantly, examples (70c–d) show that the restriction on what types of noun phrases can serve as subjects is not actually about specificity, as previous authors have suggested. In particular, universally quantified and generic noun phrases are not specific. Rather, it seems that the correct generalization regarding the type of noun phrases that may function as subjects is that just those noun phrases that were identified in the previous section as non-property denoting may function as subjects.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the requirement imposed on noun phrases that function as subjects is the exact opposite of the requirement on noun phrases that serve as the pivot of existential sentences. The impersonal nature of existential sentences (i.e., the ungrammaticality of (66)) follows, then, since there is no way for a noun phrase qua subject to simultaneously satisfy both the requirement on admissible subjects and the requirement on admissible pivots of existential sentences.

### 5.3.2 *Licensing the pivot*

In addition to explaining why existential sentences must be impersonal, we can go one step further now to offer an account of how it is that they are so licensed. Recall, in particular, that with the exception of existential sentences formed with *magkaroon*, the pivot of existential sentences is uninflected for case. The existential sentence seems to be one of the very few syntactic environments in Tagalog where a DP in an argument position can be licensed without being inflected for morphological case. It seems important, therefore, to explain how the pivot in existential sentences can be licensed in the absence of morphological case, while an ordinary object, as shown in (71), cannot.

- (71) N-agsusuot \*(ng) uniporme si Juan.  
 AGR.ASP-wear NS uniform S Juan  
 ‘Juan was wearing a uniform.’

Relevantly, there is one other environment where a DP can be licensed without being inflected for case. Namely, a DP that functions as the predicate of a clause does not require (in fact, cannot accept) morphological case. Consider the sentences in (72).

- (72) a. Mabuti-ng doctor si Maria.  
 good-LK doctor S Maria  
 ‘Maria is a good doctor.’

<sup>27</sup>Plural NPs in existential sentences cannot be interpreted generically as subjects can. Note that for this generalization to work, it must be assumed that noun phrases that contain a demonstrative must be capable of having a property denotation (when they occur in existential sentences) and an individual denotation (when they function as subjects). See Partee (1987), where the idea that particular types of noun phrases may have more than one type of denotation is put forward.

- b. Isa-ng fulltime photographer si Pinggot sa peryodiko.  
 a-LK fulltime photographer S Pinggot LOC magazine  
 'Pinggot is a fulltime photographer at the magazine.'

Based on these examples, let us suppose that the requirement that a DP inflect for morphological case is relative to the semantic type of the DP. Concretely, suppose (73).<sup>28,29</sup>

- (73) DPs that are property denoting (i.e., type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ ) do not require case inflection.

Given (73), the absence of case inflection on the DPs that function as predicates (as in (72)) follows. As predicates, these DPs are semantically type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ , and therefore do not require case. Given the hypothesis that the existential predicate's argument is itself required to be property denoting, it also follows that a DP that serves this role will not require morphological case.

Before we can accept this analysis and move on, we must address the question of how to distinguish indefinite DPs that occur as arguments of ordinary verbs, which must inflect for case (as shown by (71)), from indefinite DPs that occur as the argument of the existential predicate, which do not inflect for case. If all indefinites are property denoting (type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ ), then—according to (73)—they should never require case, contrary to the fact. The resolution to this problem involves considering the lexical properties that distinguish ordinary types of predicates from the existential predicate. Concretely, ordinary predicates like *nagsuot* 'wear' in (71) are of the type  $\langle e, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle$ , and thus, their first argument in (i.e., the direct object) must be an argument of type  $e$ . A type mismatch will therefore arise whenever the first argument that could potentially compose with this type of predicate is indefinite (type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ ). Type mismatch of this sort can be resolved, however, by a type-shifting operation that assimilates the argument to the appropriate type (type  $e$ ). One such type-shifting operation that could do this is the operation that represents a choice function, a function that maps a property onto an entity that has the property (see, e.g., Reinhart 1997; Winter 1997; Kratzer 1998). Once this type-shifting operation applies, the indefinite will be able to compose with the predicate in the normal way (e.g., via function application). Exploiting the choice function operation, the composition for a sentence like (71) is achieved as illustrated in (74).

- (74)  $\lambda y \lambda x$  [wear' (y)(x)] (CF (uniform')) (Juan)

Significantly, since the type-shifting operation shifts an indefinite DP's type from  $\langle e, t \rangle$  to  $e$ , the type-shifted DP will not be exempt from the requirement that it be inflected for morphological case.

<sup>28</sup>(73) might also have been formulated as "Property denoting DPs *cannot* inflect for morphological case". This condition would be too strong, however. Recall, in particular, that the pivot is inflected for morphological case in existential sentences formed from *magkaroon*. I attribute this to the claim that *v(magka)* assigns Case. Thus, the condition seems to be that if a DP can be assigned case, it will and, perhaps, must; but if it cannot (due to the absence of a case assigning head), it need not.

<sup>29</sup>A reviewer points out that (73) derives automatically from the Visibility Condition (Chomsky 1986), which links the Case Filter to the Theta-Criterion by requiring that argumental noun phrases (but crucially not predicative noun phrases) be made visible to Theta-assignment via Case.

Returning to the existential predicate, this predicate differs from ordinary predicates like *nagsuot* ‘wear’, etc. precisely because, given the hypothesis stated above, it *requires* its argument to be property denoting. As a consequence of this requirement, no type-shifting operation can apply to the existential predicate’s argument, since—otherwise—the requirement that it be property denoting could not be satisfied. Since the pivot is required to be property denoting, it is exempt by (73) from the morphological case requirement, just as an indefinite DP that functions as a clausal predicate is (cf. the examples in (72)).

Overall, the crucial ingredient that explains why the existential predicate’s argument does not require morphological case inflection is the analysis of the definiteness effect in which this restriction follows from the requirement that the existential predicate’s argument be property denoting. The case inflection property of the DP pivot in an existential sentence is therefore consistent with this particular treatment of the definiteness effect.<sup>30</sup>

#### 5.4 How the definiteness effect is enforced

How is the requirement that the existential predicate’s argument denote a property enforced? The literature on this question offers two solutions. For McNally (1992, 1998), van Geenhoven (1998), and others, the requirement is essentially a subcategorization restriction. Concretely, in the analysis of these authors (which develops out of Milsark’s 1974 original proposal), the existential predicate is a second order property (a property of a property). One way of formulating this as a lexical entry is given in (75), where the existential predicate denotes, essentially, the existential quantifier:

$$(75) \quad [[\text{exist}]] = \lambda P_{\langle e,t \rangle} \exists x.P(x)$$

Utilizing this denotation, a simple existential sentence such as *there is a child in the house* is associated with the following composition (assume *there-be* = *exist*) (For simplicity, I will ignore the composition of the locative phrase with rest of the sentence):

$$(76) \quad \begin{array}{ccc} & \exists x.\text{child}'(x) & \text{(Function application)} \\ & \diagdown \quad \diagup & \\ \lambda P_{\langle e,t \rangle} \exists x.P(x) & & \lambda x.\text{child}'(x) \end{array}$$

<sup>30</sup>Another approach that is often taken in the literature is to assume that the pivot receives (abstract) Case via a process of Case-transmission (Chomsky 1981; Safir 1985) in which the Case assigned to the subject is transmitted to the object. Such an approach would not do well for Tagalog if, as Sells (1998, 2000), Richards (2000) and others have argued, the subject position in Tagalog is an A-bar rather than an A-position to which no Case is assigned (see also, Pearson 2005).

Belletti (1988) and others (Lasnik 1995; Vangsnes 2002) also reject the idea of Case transmission. Belletti proposes instead that unaccusatives (e.g., the existential predicate) assign inherent partitive Case—a type of Case that is only compatible with indefinites. The proposal I have put forward in the main text of this section resembles Belletti’s proposal in some ways, but crucially assumes that rather than receiving a special type of partitive Case, the pivot receives no Case at all. An advantage of my approach over Belletti’s is that it generalizes to predicative DPs, which are also caseless.

Chung and Ladusaw (2004) offer an alternative approach in recent work. They propose that the existential predicate is a simple first order property, i.e., a simple  $\langle e, t \rangle$  predicate with the lexical entry in (77).

$$(77) \quad [[\text{exist}]] = \lambda x. \text{exist}'(x)$$

They propose that this predicate must be composed with its argument via a compositional rule, *Restrict*. Restrict works differently from the standard composition rule of function application in that it is a non-saturating compositional operation. That is, rather than saturating a predicate, Restrict adds the property content of the predicate's argument to the predicate. The result of this operation is the creation of a new predicate from the intersection of the property content of both the predicate and its property denoting argument. (78) illustrates. Note that when the existential predicate's argument composes with the existential predicate, the argument does not saturate the predicate. Rather, the variable introduced by the predicate and its property denoting argument is not bound until the end of the composition, when (default) existential closure applies (see, e.g., Diesing 1992).

$$(78) \quad \exists x. [\text{exist}'(x) \wedge \text{child}'(x)] \quad (\text{Existential closure})$$

$$\begin{array}{c} | \\ \lambda x. [\text{exist}'(x) \wedge \text{child}'(x)] \quad (\text{Restrict}) \\ \wedge \\ \lambda x. \text{exist}'(x) \qquad \lambda x. \text{child}'(x) \end{array}$$

Note that both approaches lead to equivalent results as far as the meaning of the existential sentence is concerned. Deciding between these alternatives therefore cannot be entirely a matter of the semantics alone (though see McNally 2005 for some recent discussion). Chung and Ladusaw present morphosyntactic evidence from two languages (the Austronesian languages Maori and Chamorro) for choosing their Restrict operation as the manner by which the requirement that the existential predicate's argument be property denoting is enforced. As it happens, the morphosyntax of Tagalog existential sentences provides an interesting argument for adopting Chung and Ladusaw's approach based on Restrict as well.

As pointed out earlier, when the existential predicate is the full *mayroon* (rather than simply *may*), the existential predicate's argument is inflected with the linker (see Section 3 for additional details). Ideally, one would like to be able to assimilate the presence of this linker with its presence elsewhere in the language. That said, the main function of the linker in Tagalog (as in other Austronesian languages) is to mark various types of modification. The most important of these for our purposes is the type of modification involving noun phrases and their (restrictive) modifiers. As already noted, when a noun phrase is combined with a modifier, a linker surfaces inside noun phrases between the noun phrase and its modifier. Consider the examples in (79) (repeated from Section 3).

$$(79) \quad \text{a. ahas } \underline{\text{na}} \text{ makamandag} \\ \text{snake LK venomous} \\ \text{'venomous snake'}$$

- b. Ang mga estudyante-ng n-agtrabaho nang masakap.  
 S PL student-LK AGR.ASP-work ADV hard  
 ‘The students who worked hard.’

I assume here that noun phrases and their modifiers are composed by an operation of Predicate Modification (Heim and Kratzer 1998), which combines a property P and a property Q and creates a new property from their intersection. (80) shows the outcome of predicate modification applied to the example in (79a).

$$(80) \quad \lambda x. [\text{snake}'(x) \wedge \text{venomous}'(x)] \quad (\text{Predicate Modification})$$

$$\underbrace{\hspace{10em}}$$

$$\lambda x. \text{snake}'(x) \qquad \lambda x. \text{venomous}'(x)$$

Note that the output of Predicate Modification is identical to the output of Restrict applied to two property denoting expressions. In other words, Chung and Ladusaw’s Restrict operation treats the semantic relationship between the existential predicate and its argument on a par with the semantic relationship between the noun phrases and their modifiers in the examples in (79). Adopting Chung and Ladusaw’s analysis of the definiteness effect involving Restrict, therefore sheds light on the presence of the linker in existential sentences by allowing it to be seen more generally as an inflection whose function is to indicate the effect of non-saturating semantic composition (modification, more generally).<sup>31</sup> An alternative approach, such as one based on McNally’s lexical entry in (75), would not be able to relate the presence of the linker in existential sentences with its presence in constructions, such as those in (79), involving restrictive modification.

Summarizing, this section has advocated an analysis of the definiteness effect for Tagalog in which the restriction follows from the lexical requirement of the existential predicate that its argument be property denoting. By taking this type of approach, we were able to concomitantly account for some of the initially puzzling properties of existential sentences in the language—namely, their impersonal structure, and the absence of case inflection on the pivot. With regards to how this restriction is imposed, it was argued that Chung and Ladusaw’s approach was superior in so far as it provides an illuminating account of an additional morphosyntactic oddity of existential sentences relating, in particular, to the presence of the linker. (All said, I will suggest in the next section that McNally’s lexical entry in (75) still has an important role to play in the semantics of existential sentences.)

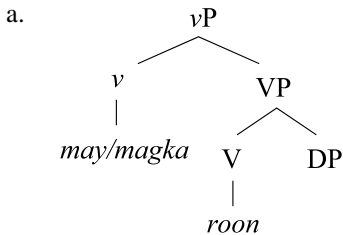
An important upshot of the discussion so far is that since we have shown that the more peculiar morphosyntactic properties of existential sentences can be explained as a consequence of the lexical-semantic account of the definiteness effect, no further modifications are necessary to the relatively simple picture of the syntax of existential sentences argued for in Sections 3 and 4.

<sup>31</sup>An interesting question here is whether the linker, in its predicate modification use, is semantically vacuous, or whether it itself “provides the instruction” to apply predicate modification. Under this view, the linker would denote something of type  $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, \langle e, t \rangle\rangle$ . I leave this question open for further research.

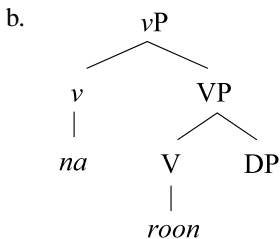
### 6 Consequences and final refinements

One of the motivations behind the decompositional analysis of *mayroon* and *magka-roon* was to capture the morphological relationship between these existential predicates and the locative predicate *naroon* ‘be-there’. To make this relationship more concrete, we can say that both predicates are made up of a lexical projection of the (possibly uncategorized) root *roon*, but that they differ with respect to the ‘flavor’ of the functional head (=v) that takes this projection as its complement. If we take the v head of the locative predicate to be *na*, then the structures for the existential predicate and the locative predicate are as in (81a) and (81b), respectively.

(81) *Existential predicate*



*Locative predicate*



Taking this approach leads us to an interesting problem. Concretely, in the discussion of the existential predicate at the end of the last sub-section, we concluded that the existential predicate must combine with its argument via Chung and Ladusaw’s Restrict. Restating this in terms of the analysis in (81a), we can now say more precisely that it is the root *roon* that must compose with the pivot via Restrict. Problematically, however, we do not want to generalize this requirement to the root *roon* when it occurs as part of the locative predicate—that is, when it occurs in the structure in (81b). The reason for this is that the DP which functions as the argument of the locative predicate is not restricted by the definiteness effect. That this is so is made clear by the fact that the various types of noun phrases that are excluded in existential sentences are perfectly acceptable with the locative predicate, as the examples in (82–84) show (cf. the examples in (58), (60), and (62) from Section 4).

(82) *Naroon ang lahat.* (Universal quantifier)  
 PRED.there S all  
 ‘Everyone is there.’

- (83) Sino [ang [*Op* naroon *t* sa bahay]]? (Wh-trace of *sino* ‘who’)  
 who S PRED.there LOC house  
 ‘Who is there in the house?’
- (84) Naroon sa Maynila si Juan. (Proper name)  
 PRED.there LOC Manila S Juan.  
 ‘Juan is there in Manila.’

Recall, furthermore, that the fact that existential sentences are impersonal (i.e., the fact that the pivot cannot serve as the syntactic subject of the clause) was attributed to a clash between the requirement imposed on subjects (i.e., that they be non property denoting) and the requirement imposed on the pivot of existential sentences (i.e., that it denote a property). Crucially, clauses containing the locative predicate are personal rather than impersonal: The single noun phrase argument of the locative predicate, which—by hypothesis—corresponds to the pivot of the existential sentence, is the syntactic subject of the clause that contains the locative predicate.

The question, then, is this: How can we account for the morphosyntactic relatedness of the existential predicate and the locative predicate, but at the same time account for their syntactic and semantic differences? To pose the question concretely in terms of the analysis of the existential predicate involving Restrict: How can we force *roon* to compose with its argument (=the pivot) via Restrict when it occurs in the structure in (81a)—but not force it to do so when it occurs in the structure in (81b)?

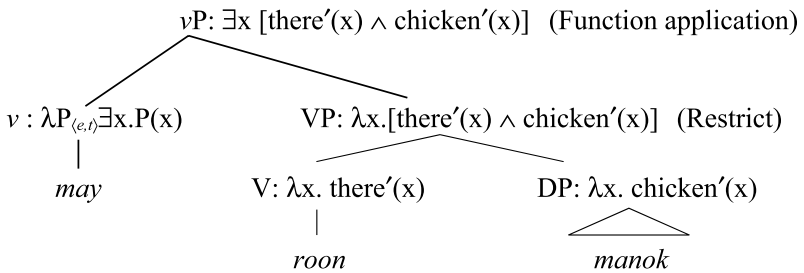
The solution to this problem involves reintroducing McNally’s proposal in (75), in which the requirement that the existential predicate’s argument be property denoting is formalized as a subcategorization restriction. In Section 5.1, this was fleshed out in terms of the following lexical entry for the existential predicate, repeated here as (85):

- (85) [[**exist**]] =  $\lambda P_{(e,t)} \exists x.P(x)$

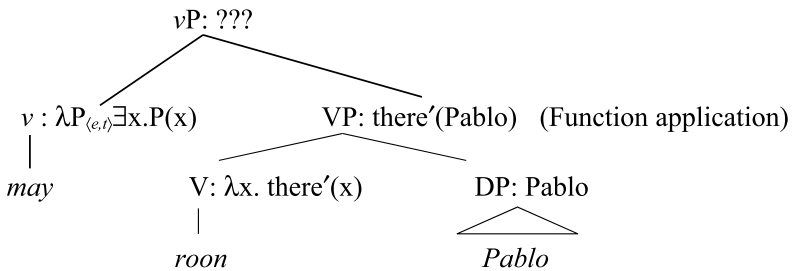
At the end of the preceding section, I rejected (85) in favor of Chung and Ladusaw’s proposal involving Restrict. Considering the decompositional analysis of the existential predicate in (81a), however, it is now possible to combine these analyses in a way that derives the results that we are interested in. Concretely, let us suppose that *may/magka*—here analyzed as the functional head, *v*, has the denotation in (85). As a direct consequence of this, it now follows that the root *roon* must compose with its internal argument (=the pivot) via Restrict. To see how this works, compare the derivation in (86a), where the pivot is a property denoting indefinite, with the one in (86b), where the pivot is a proper name and hence, non property denoting. (Again for simplicity, I will ignore the composition of the locative phrase with the rest of the sentence.)

- (86) a. Mayroo-ng manok sa bahay.  
 exist.there-LK chicken LOC house  
 ‘There is a chicken in the house.’





- b. \*Mayroon(-g) (si/ni) Pablo sa handaan ko.  
 exist.there-1k (S/NS) Pablo LOC party 1SG(NS)  
 ‘There is Juan in the house.’



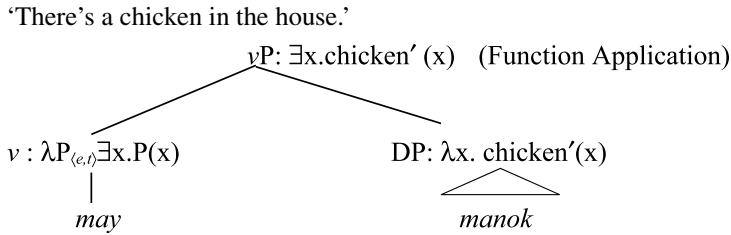
Notice that the derivation for (86b) fails because at the point when *may* is introduced its complement is not of the appropriate type: It is type *t* rather than type  $\langle e,t \rangle$ . Crucially, it is no longer necessary to stipulate that *roon* must combine with its argument via *Restrict*, since this now follows as a direct consequence of the demands imposed by the presence of *may*—namely, the requirement that its complement be property denoting.<sup>32</sup> It follows also, then, that when the lexical projection of *roon* is not embedded under *may*—e.g., when it is instead embedded under *na*, as in the structure for the locative predicate *naroon* ‘be there’ in (81b)—it will be free to compose with definite and other types of noun phrases that are prohibited from occurring in the existential. This is the desired result.<sup>33</sup>

To complete the picture, note that the analysis here also provides a straightforward account of the existential sentences in which *roon* does not occur. Recall, in particular, the discussion in Section 3 where it was suggested that when *roon* does not occur it is simply not projected at all. In syntactic terms, *v* takes the pivot directly as its complement. An analysis of *may* as having the denotation in (85) offers a straightforward semantic composition of these sentences.

- (87) May manok sa bahay.  
 exist chicken LOC house

<sup>32</sup>See Potts (*Lecture notes, UMass Amherst*) for arguments that it might be desirable to limit application of *Restrict* as a derived consequence, rather than by stipulating that certain predicates are required to compose with their argument(s) via *Restrict*.

<sup>33</sup>For the time being, I assume that *na* is semantically vacuous.



Overall, an analysis of the definiteness effect in Tagalog which combines McNally’s analysis of the existential predicate in (85) with Chung and Ladusaw’s Restrict operation provides a parsimonious account of the morphosyntactic relatedness of the existential predicate *mayroon* and the locative predicate *naroon*, while at the same time capturing the crucial difference between these two predicates relating to the definiteness effect.

## 7 Conclusion

I conclude by summarizing the main results of this study.

First, I have argued that, despite some varied and intricate morphosyntactic patterns, all existential sentences in Tagalog have an impersonal clause structure. Cross-linguistically, this result is unsurprising (existential sentences are impersonal in most of the languages I am familiar with). A larger and more interesting question is why existential sentences should routinely be impersonal. For Tagalog, I have argued that the impersonal clause structure of existential sentences follows from the conflicting demands of the definiteness effect and the language particular “specificity” condition on subjects. This is, very plainly, a language internal explanation. There are many languages that exhibit a definiteness effect in existentials but for which there is no “specificity” condition on subjects (English, for instance).

Second, I have argued that the existential predicates *mayroon* and *magkaroon* in Tagalog are morphologically and syntactically complex: The elements *may* and *magka* take as their complement a phrase (a VP) which is headed by the element *roon*, which, in turn, takes the noun phrase pivot as its argument. From a certain point of view, then, existential sentences in Tagalog resemble existential sentences in languages (such as Italian as argued by Moro 1997 or Irish as argued by McCloskey 2006) which exploit a small clause complement of a copular verb, in which the small clause predicate is a locative pro-form and the pivot functions as the subject of the small clause. However, I have argued that despite this very close connection, this type of small clause analysis is not correct for Tagalog. The main basis of this argument involved negative arguments for treating *roon* as a small clause predicate in addition to a demonstration that none of the other constituents that occur in existential sentences can be analyzed as a small clause predicate. More generally, there is no positive evidence for a small clause analysis of existential sentences in Tagalog. The analysis I ended up with, therefore, is one that is more in line with the so-called “NP analysis” of existentials, proposed originally for English by Jenkins (1975) (see also Williams 1984) and subsequently argued for other languages as well.

The discussion makes it quite clear, therefore, that there is no universal syntax associated with existential sentences. It remains an open question, however, just how varied the syntax of existential sentences might be cross-linguistically. In this work, I have considered only two of the most prominent syntactic analyses of existential sentences (the small clause analysis and the “NP analysis”). In fact, I am unaware of any analyses of existential sentences that differ substantially from either of these two major ones. The time is right, therefore, for an investigation of the syntax of existential sentences in less familiar languages. Study of less familiar languages should reveal whether these two major analyses exhaust the possible class of existential constructions allowed by Universal Grammar or not.

Finally, I have argued that the pattern of the definiteness effect in Tagalog existential sentences can be successfully accounted for given the general analysis of this restriction in which it follows from the requirement that the pivot be a property denoting object. I considered two analyses (the one proposed by McNally, and the other proposed by Chung and Ladusaw) which seek to explain how this restriction is enforced by the grammar. By comparing the locative predicate and the existential predicate in Tagalog, I arrived at the surprising conclusion that these analyses are not mutually exclusive, but that once they are assumed to work together, we can account for the “alternation” between existential and predicate locative constructions.

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## Sources of examples

All examples which do not have an explicit citation are based on field work by the author. Additional examples come from one of the following sources:

- LE *Tagalog–English Dictionary* (1986), by Leo James English.
- TB *Tagalog Bible* (1997), Philippine Bible Society, Manila.
- ITS *Impormasyon para sa mga Tumatanggap ng Sustento* (Government document)
- KH *Kung hindi na maaaring malunasan ang inyong kanser* (Government document)
- MB *Maligayang Bati!* (Government document)
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