

8 *Event existentials in Tagalog: A Role and Reference Grammar account*

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1 Introduction¹

This paper investigates an interesting type of existential construction in Tagalog and proposes an analysis of it in terms of Role and Reference Grammar. The construction in question is known as an ‘event existential’ and is exemplified in (1), and it contrasts with a ‘plain’ or ‘nominal’ existential construction in (2). Example (1) is from Aldridge (2011), who presents a Minimalist analysis of the construction; (2) is from Sabbagh (2009).

- (1) *May b<in>ili-ng libro ang babae.*
EXIST <PERF.UV>buy-LNK book NOM woman
‘The woman bought a book.’
- (2) *May libro-ng b<in>ili ng babae.*
EXIST book-LNK <PERF.UV>buy GEN woman
‘There is a book which a/the woman bought.’

A brief introduction to the morphological markers for voice and case of Tagalog which will play a role in the following discussion is in order. Tagalog clauses are typically predicate-initial, and a verbal predicate carries voice marking which indicates the semantic function of the nominative argument, as illustrated in (3)-(4).

- (3) *B<in>ili ng babae ang libro.*
<PERF.UV>buy GEN woman NOM book²
‘A/the woman bought the book.’
- (4) *B<um>ili ang babae ng libro.*
<PERF.AV>buy NOM woman GEN book
‘The woman bought a book.’

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² Abbreviations: AV ‘actor voice’, CsP ‘case particle’, DAT ‘dative’, GEN ‘genitive’, LNK ‘linker’, NOM ‘nominative’, NUC ‘nucleus’, PERF ‘perfective’, PRED ‘predicate’, RP ‘reference phrase’, UV ‘undergoer voice’.

The two argument case markers are *ang* ‘nominative’ and *ng* ‘genitive’ (pronounced [naŋ]), and any of the arguments of a verb like *bili* ‘buy’ can function as the nominative argument: in (3) the undergoer is nominative, and in (4) the actor is nominative.³ The voice of the verb signals the semantic function of the *ang*-marked argument: undergoer voice in (3), actor voice in (4). Adjunct modifiers of argument expressions occur with what is called a linker, which is *ng* (pronounced [ŋ]) or *na*, depending on the phonological environment; it is distinct from the case marker *ng*. In (2), the relative clause modifying the noun *libro* ‘book’ is connected to it by the linker *ng*.

The construction in (1) has interesting properties. First, (1) and (2) differ semantically: (1) asserts the existence of an event, i.e. ‘there was buying of a book by the woman’, while (2) asserts the existence of an entity. Both may be used to introduce a new referent. This distinguishes (1) from (4), in which the genitive undergoer *libro* ‘book’ is normally non-referential. Second, the actor of *bili* ‘buy’ is nominative in (1), despite the verb having undergoer voice, in contrast to (2) with an externally-headed restrictive relative clause in which the actor of *bili* is genitive, as expected. If the actor in (1) were genitive, as in (5), this results in ungrammaticality, and if the actor were nominative in the nominal existential, as in (6), the result is likewise ungrammatical.

(5) **May b<in>ili-ng libro ng babae.*
 EXIST <PERF.UV>buy-LNK book GEN woman
 ‘The woman bought a book.’

(6) **May libro-ng b<in>ili ang babae.*⁴
 EXIST book-LNK <PERF.UV>buy NOM woman
 ‘There is a book which the woman bought.’

Third, the complement predicate in the event existential must be in undergoer voice, if transitive, whereas this is not true of the plain existential, as (7) and (8) show.

(7) **May b<um>ili-ng libro ang babae.*
 EXIST <PERF.AV>buy-LNK book NOM woman
 ‘The woman bought a book.’

(8) *May babae-ng b<um>ili ng libro.*
 EXIST woman-LNK <PERF.AV>buy GEN book
 ‘There is a woman who bought a book.’

Fourth, the undergoer of *bili* is not nominative, as its voice normally requires; rather, it is marked by the linker *na/ng*, a fact which is left unexplained in Aldridge (2011). Fifth, extraction is possible out of the unit headed by *bili* in (1) but not (2); (9) is an event existential (Aldridge 2011:2), while (10), a plain existential, is from Sabbagh (2009:698).

(9) *Saan may ni-luto-ng isda ang guro?*
 where EXIST PERF.UV-cook-LNK fish NOM teacher
 ‘Where was a fish cooked by the teacher?’

³ Their semantic functions are usually described in terms of thematic roles; for a discussion, see Latrouite (2011).

⁴ This sentence is grammatical with the meaning ‘The woman has a book which was bought’; see §3.

- (10) **Saan may bata-ng i<ni>ligtas ni Huan?*
 where EXIST child-LNK <PERF.UV>rescue GEN Juan
 ‘Where_i is there a child which_j Juan rescued ___j ____i?’⁵

Thus, the event existential differs substantially morphosyntactically and semantically from the nominal existential, and these differences need to be accounted for.

The goal of this paper is to present a Role and Reference Grammar [RRG] (Foley & Van Valin 1984, Van Valin & LaPolla 1997, Van Valin 2005) analysis of the event existential in (1), which will account for the phenomena detailed above. The discussion will proceed as follows. In §2 a brief introduction to RRG will be given, and in §3 the account of event existentials in Tagalog will be presented. Conclusions follow in §4.

2 Role and Reference Grammar

RRG posits a single syntactic representation for a sentence, and it is concrete, not abstract, in the sense that it should represent the actual form of the sentence. No phonologically null elements are permitted in syntactic representations. There is a direct mapping between the semantic representation and the syntactic representation, unmediated by abstract syntactic representations. Discourse-pragmatics (information structure) may play a role in this mapping. This is sketched in Figure 2.1.

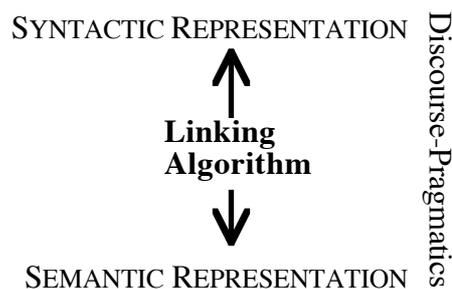


Figure 2.1: The organization of Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin 2005)

Clauses and referring expressions, termed ‘reference phrases’ [RPs] in RRG, have a layered structure: the nucleus [NUC] of the clause contains the predicate and the nucleus_R of the RP contains the head. The core of the clause contains the nucleus plus the arguments of the predicate (default), and the core_R contains the nucleus_R plus the arguments of relational nouns and deverbal nominals. Clause and sentence nodes dominate core, while RP dominates core_R. Clauses differ from cores in two important ways: first, they may contain optional constituents like a special position for displaced WH-expressions, and they can be modified by tense operators. Sentences are clauses plus optional positions for dislocated phrases. The layered constituent structure of the Tagalog sentence in (3) is given in Figure 2.2.

⁵ The intended (impossible) meaning is a question about where the rescue took place, not about the location of the child. It is acceptable if it is a question about the location of the child who was rescued.

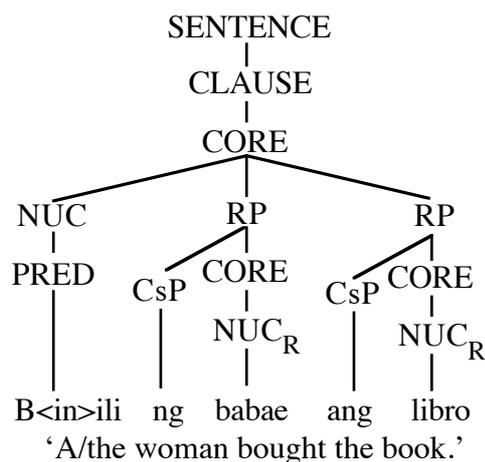


Figure 2.2: Aspects of the constituent structure of the Tagalog sentence in (3)

The case markers *ng* ‘genitive’ and *ang* ‘nominative’ occur before the head of the RP but are not prepositions (Himmelman 2008); they are therefore represented as ‘case particles’ [CsP] in the RP structure.

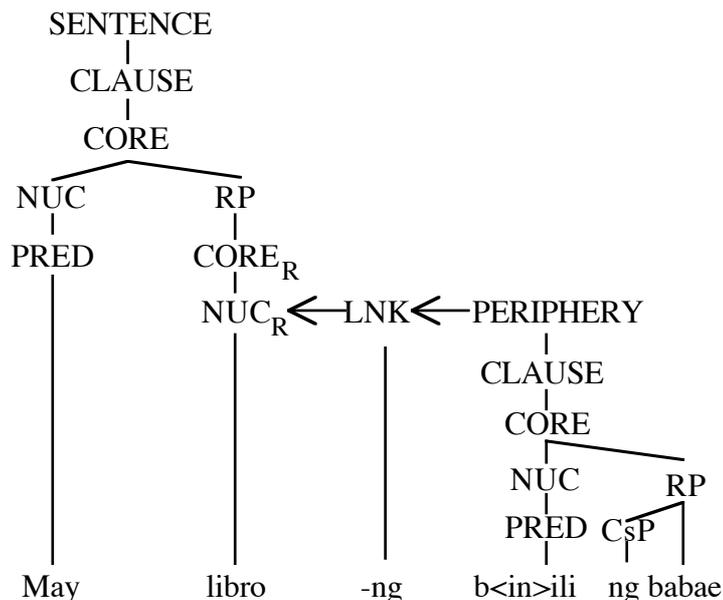
Syntactic categories need not be projections of lexical categories in RRG; the two most important syntactic categories, nucleus and reference phrase, are not projections of verb and noun, respectively (Van Valin 2008). This is particularly important for the analysis of Philippine languages, where there appear to be no constraints on which lexical categories can serve as predicate (nucleus) or argument (RP) (Himmelman 2008). In (11), the nucleus is a lexical verb and the RP contains a noun, whereas in (12) the predicate in the nucleus is a noun and the RP contains a lexical verb (Schachter 1985).

(11) [_{NUC} *Nag-trabaho*] [_{RP} *ang lalaki*]
 PERF.AV-work NOM man
 ‘The man worked.’

(12) [_{NUC} *Lalaki*] [_{RP} *ang nag-trabaho*].
 man NOM PERF.AV-work
 ‘The one who worked is a man.’

Accordingly, the lexical category of nuclei and RPs will not be specified in the syntactic representations.

There is a periphery containing optional adjunct modifiers at each level of the clause and RP, and a linker occurs between each such modifier and the RP layer modified. Of particular relevance to this discussion is the fact that externally-headed restrictive relative clauses are modifiers in the nuclear periphery of the RP, as illustrated in Figure 2.3, which represents the structure of (2), the nominal existential. Note the lack of a case particle on the ‘pivot’ of the existential construction, *libro* ‘book’, in contrast to (3) and (4).



‘There is a book which a/the woman bought.’

Figure 2.3: Structure of nominal existential in (2)

The semantic representations in RRG are decompositional in nature; the ‘logical structure’ of the examples in (3)–(4) is given in (13).

(13) **do'** (babae, [**buy'** (babae, libro)]) = (3)–(4)

(14) involves an attributive modifier, which will be relevant to the analysis of restrictive relative clauses as in (2).

(14) *B<um>ili ng mabuti-ng kotse si Pedro.*
 <PERF.AV>buy GEN good-LNK car NOM
 ‘Pedro bought a good car.’ = **do'** (Pedro, [**buy'** (Pedro, [**be'** (kotse, [**good'**])])])])

The abstract predicate **be'** is a marker of an attributive predication in the semantic representation and **good'** is the attribute. The word *kotse* ‘car’ is underlined to indicate that it functions both in the embedded attributive predication and simultaneously in the matrix predication; it is both the second argument of **buy'** and the bearer of the attribute **good'**.

RRG distinguishes lexical from constructional meaning and represents them both using the same system of lexical decomposition. In this paper we represent lexical meaning as in (13) and (14), using small boldface letters, e.g. **pred'**, whereas constructional meaning will be represented in small caps, e.g. PRED'. In a relative clause the attribute is a whole logical structure, and the interpretation of the clause as an attribute is constructional, and accordingly the marker of the attributive predication is BE' instead of **be'** as in (14). This is illustrated in (15) with the English relative clause *the car John bought* in which the interpretation of *John bought* as an attribute in an attributive predication is entirely constructional. The first argument of BE' is a participant in the logical structure functioning as the attribute.

- (15) *Mary likes the car John bought.*
like' (Mary, [BE' (car_i, [do' (John, [buy' (John, x_i)])])])])

The car is the head of the attributive predication and has the attribute 'John bought', which is indicated by the cointexed variable in the logical structure of *buy*. It is simultaneously the thing liked in the logical structure of *like*, and its dual role is indicated by the underlining: the logical structure in (15) is a combination of **like'** (Mary, car) (= *Mary likes the car*) and BE' (car_i, [do' (John, [buy' (John, x_i)])]) (= *the car John bought*).

3 The event existential construction in Tagalog

The sentence in (1) is not only interpretable as an event existential; according to Naylor (2005:430), it can also be interpreted as a possessive construction with the meaning 'the woman has a bought book' (see also Schachter & Otnes 1972:279). Naylor gives the example in (16) of a basic possessive construction, which also has *may* 'exist' as the nucleus, and she also gives the example in (17) (Naylor 2005:430), which seems to contain the same ultimate constituents in the same order as in (1) and has an event existential reading.

- (16) *May pera ang bata.*
 EXIST money NOM child
 'The child has money.'
- (17) *May b<in>ili-ng laruan ang bata.*
 EXIST <PERF.UV>buy-LNK toy NOM child
 'The child has a bought toy,' or 'The child bought a toy.'
- (18) *May laruan na b<in>ili ang bata.*
 EXIST toy LNK <PERF.UV>buy NOM child
 'The child has a bought toy.'

In (17), on a possession interpretation, *binili-ng laruan* 'toy which was bought' is an internally-headed relative clause, realizing the possessed argument.⁶ It has the same meaning as (18), which has an externally-headed relative clause; (18) does not have an event existential reading, however. Not all possessive constructions like (17) have an event existential reading; the existence of such a reading depends on the plausibility of the event, as M. Saclot (pers. comm.) points out. The possessive construction in (19) is unlikely to have an event existential interpretation, due to the impossibility of a cat peeling a potato.⁷

- (19) *May b<in>alata-ng patatas ang pusa.*
 EXIST <PERF.UV>peel-LNK potato NOM cat
 'The cat has a peeled potato.'/#'The cat peeled the potato.'

In our view, the superficial identity between the possessive construction in (17) and the event existential in (1) is the key to explaining the properties of the event existential con-

⁶ As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, (17) is, strictly speaking, ambiguous between a structure with an internally-headed relative clause and one with a pre-head externally-headed relative clause. Placement of adjuncts such as temporal adverbials, e.g. in (22), which is unambiguously internally headed, can resolve the ambiguity. Crucial for our analysis is the fact that (17) has as one of its structural analyses a possessive construction containing an internally-headed relative clause.

⁷ One of our consultants did in fact get an eventive reading for (19), which he found humorous.

struction given in §1. Our hypothesis, then, is that event existentials are related to possessive constructions such as the one in (17). This involves both the semantic and syntactic properties of the two constructions, and we will show that sentences like (1) and (17) are structurally ambiguous, with the same string of words having two different structures, one corresponding to the event existential interpretation and one corresponding to the possessive interpretation. Moreover, event existentials developed via a diachronic reanalysis from possessive constructions containing an internally-headed relative clause into the event existential construction.

The starting point for this account is the semantic and syntactic representations of possessive constructions such as (16). The semantic representation for (16) is **exist'** (pera) \wedge **HAVE'** (bata, pera); *pera* ‘money’ is simultaneously the entity of which existence is predicated (the first proposition, **exist'** (pera)) and the possessed entity in the second proposition (**HAVE'** (bata, pera)). There is no lexical verb of possession, unlike in English and many other languages; hence the interpretation of *bata* ‘child’ as the possessor is purely constructional, and therefore the possessive proposition is represented by **HAVE'** rather than **have'**. The syntactic structure for (16) is a simple predication, as in Figure 3.1.

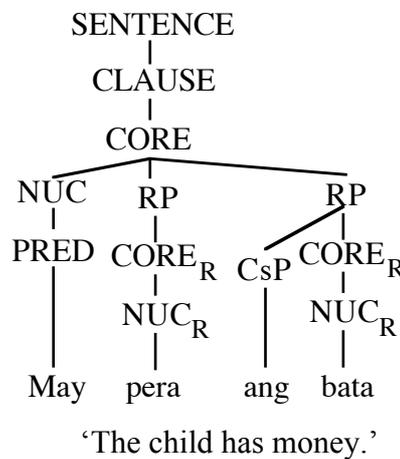


Figure 3.1: Structure of simple Tagalog possessive predication in (16)

The semantic representation for (17) is more complex, as it includes an attributive predication which is realized as an internally-headed relative clause.

- (20) Attributive semantic representation: BE' (x , [**attribute'**], where **attribute'** is a full predication in the case of a relative clause (see (15)).
- (21) **exist'** (laruan) \wedge **HAVE'** (bata, [BE' (x_i , [**do'** (y , [**buy'** (y , laruan_i)])])])])

The basic possessive predication in (17) is represented the same way as for (16), i.e. **exist'** (laruan) \wedge **HAVE'** (bata, laruan). In order to represent the predication in the internally-headed relative clause in (17), an attributive predication containing *laruan* replaces it in the possessive representation; [BE' (x_i , [**do'** (y , [**buy'** (y , laruan_i)])])]) means ‘toy which *y* bought’, where it is an attribute of x that y bought x , x being *laruan*.⁸ In the final represen-

⁸ In the semantic representation for an externally-headed relative clause, the external x would be lexically filled and the corresponding variable in the embedded proposition would be coindexed and left lexically unfilled, as in (15). Thus the semantic representation for (18) would be:

(i) **exist'** (laruan) \wedge **HAVE'** (bata, [BE' (laruan_i, [**do'** (y , [**buy'** (y , x_i)])])])]).

tation in (21), *laruan* functions as an argument in four predications: the second argument of **buy**’, the first argument of **BE**’, the second argument of **HAVE**’ (which is signaled by the underlining), and the single argument of **exist**’.

The syntactic structure of (17) is given in Figure 3.2. The head noun *laruan* ‘toy’ occurs inside the relative clause, and it is coindexed with the RP node dominating the internally-headed relative clause, signaling that it functions in both the main and embedded clauses, following Van Valin & LaPolla (1997). The linker *-ng* signals that *laruan* ‘toy’ is the modified noun within the relative clause. This is related to its function of connecting adjunct modifiers to the element modified, as in (2) and (18), but there is no adjunct modifier in (17); rather, *laruan* ‘toy’ is internal to the modifying clause, and the linker indicates that it is the modified element.

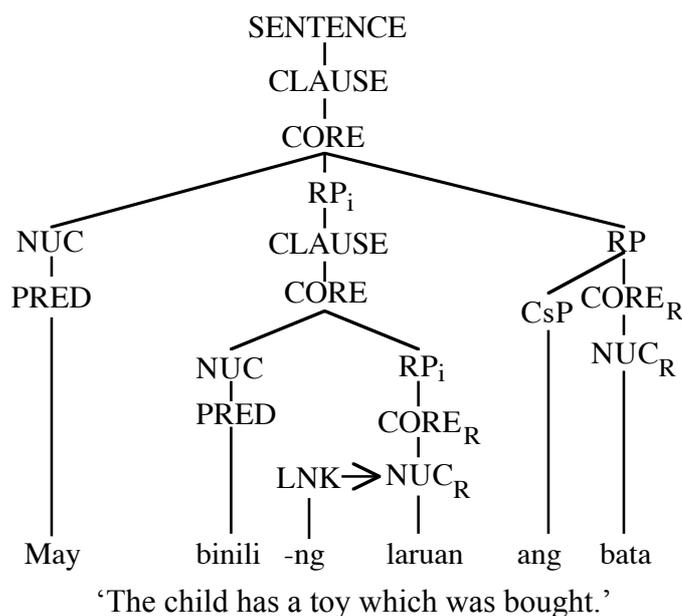


Figure 3.2: Structure of possessive construction with internally-headed relative clause in (17)

That it is a full clause can be seen in the possibility of the main and relative clauses having conflicting temporal adverbs, as shown in (22); (23) gives the externally-headed relative clause version. (Both examples are from J. Dery, pers. comm.)

(22) *Ngayon may [b<in>ili-ng laruan kahapon] ang bata.*
 today EXIST <PERF.UV>buy-LNK toy yesterday NOM child
 ‘Today the child has a toy that was bought yesterday’

(23) *Ngayon may laruan na [b<in>ili kahapon] ang bata.*
 today EXIST toy LNK <PERF.UV>buy yesterday NOM child
 ‘Today the child has a toy that was bought yesterday.’

The meaning of (21) and (i) is the same propositionally but not necessarily information structurally. The difference reflects a technical point in the RRG linking theory, namely, that an argument or adjunct must be represented in the semantic representation of the clause in which it appears (except for extraction phenomena). Since *laruan* ‘toy’ appears in the relative clause in (17), it must be linked from the semantic representation of the relative clause, whereas in (18) it appears in the main clause, and therefore it must be linked from the semantic representation of the main clause. See Van Valin (2012) for detailed discussion of linking in relative clauses.

An important property of this construction is that the possessor need not be interpreted as the actor of the relative clause predicate. In the previous examples there has been no explicit actor in the relative clause, either internally-headed, as in (17) or externally-headed, as in (18); in the following pairs of examples, there is an explicit actor in both types of relative clauses: internally-headed in (24) and (26) (Law 2010:309, 315) and externally-headed in (25) and (27) (J. Dery, pers. comm.).

- (24) *May ni-luto-ng isda ni Pedro ang guro.*
 EXIST PERF.UV-cook-LNK fish GEN NOM teacher
 ‘The teacher has fish that was cooked by Pedro.’
- (25) *May isda-ng ni-luto ni Pedro ang guro.*
 EXIST fish-LNK PERF.UV-cook GEN NOM teacher
 ‘The teacher has fish that was cooked by Pedro.’
- (26) *May g<in>awa ng pamahalaan na bahay ang guro.*
 EXIST <PERF.UV>build GEN government LNK house NOM teacher
 ‘The teacher has a house that was built by the government.’
- (27) *May bahay ang guro na g<in>awa ng pamahalaan.*
 EXIST house NOM teacher LNK <PERF.UV>build GEN government
 ‘The teacher has a house that was built by the government.’

The transition from a possessive construction to an event evidential can be described in terms of a series of changes:

1. The possessor is analyzed as the actor of the embedded predicate. This creates a control relationship between the possessor (*bata* ‘child’) and the embedded predicate *bili* ‘buy’, as in (28), in which the control relationship is indicated by the coindexing of *bata* with the actor argument (*y*) of *do*’ (*y*, [*buy*’ (*y*, *z*)]).
2. The establishment of a control relationship affects the constructions and their meanings:
 - a. As part of a restrictive relative clause, the embedded proposition is in a clause and is presupposed; control relations in RRG can only exist across core boundaries, and consequently the embedded unit must be reanalyzed as a core and is no longer necessarily presupposed. Therefore the embedded proposition is no longer a restrictive modifier, and the attributive constructional meaning is lost. The resulting syntactic structure is given in Figure 3.3 below.
 - b. The interpretation of the erstwhile possessor as the actor of the embedded predicate strongly disfavors the constructional possession interpretation, leaving the RP stranded in the matrix core, and as a result it is constructionally interpreted as being the doer of an unspecified action. This loss of the possession reading is caused by the incompatibility of obligatory control relations and possessive predications; possession predicates do not take propositional complements, just RP complements, and obligatory control relations are always between two propositions which obligatorily share an argument. Hence the establishment of an obligatory control relationship between the erstwhile possessor and the actor of the embedded predicate is incompatible with the interpretation of ‘*may ... ang RP*’ as a possession construction, restricting *may* to a purely existential reading and causing the *ang RP* to be interpreted as the actor of an unspecified action, as given in (29).

3. The scope of the existential predicate extends to include the entire event description, yielding an event existential: (30)

(28) $\text{exist}'(\text{laruan}) \wedge \text{HAVE}'(\text{bata}, \text{laruan}) \wedge [\text{BE}'(x_i, [\text{do}'(y, [\text{buy}'(y, \text{laruan}_i)])]) \Rightarrow$

$\text{exist}'(\text{laruan}) \wedge \text{HAVE}'(\text{bata}_j, \text{laruan}) \wedge [\text{BE}'(x_i, [\text{do}'(y_j, [\text{buy}'(y_j, \text{laruan}_i)])])]$

(29) $\text{exist}'(\text{laruan}) \wedge \text{DO}'(\text{bata}_j, \emptyset) \wedge \text{do}'(y_j, [\text{buy}'(y_j, \text{laruan})])]$

(30) $\text{exist}'(\text{laruan} \wedge \text{DO}'(\text{bata}_j, \emptyset) \wedge \text{do}'(y_j, [\text{buy}'(y_j, \text{laruan})]))]$

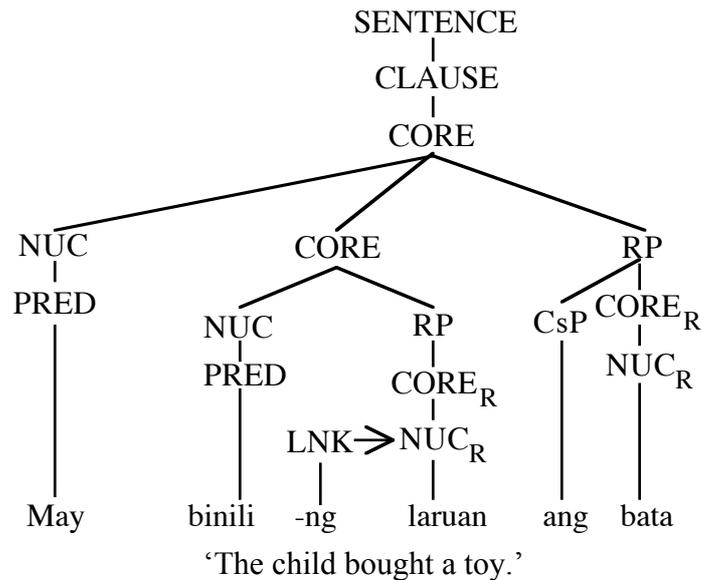


Figure 3.3: The structure of the event existential reading of (17)

The linker is a remnant of the structure in Figure 3.2, but it no longer marks that *laruan* ‘toy’ is modified.

Evidence that the embedded unit is a core rather than a clause as in Figure 3.2 comes from the impossibility of there being conflicting temporal adverbs in this construction, as shown in (31) and (32), from Aldridge (2011), in contrast to (22) and (23).⁹

(31) *May* [*is<in>ulat-ng* *love letter kahapon*] *ang babae.*
 EXIST <PERF.UV>write-LNK yesterday NOM woman
 ‘The woman wrote a love letter yesterday.’

(32) **Ngayon may* [*is<in>ulat-ng* *love letter kahapon*] *ang babae.*
 today EXIST <PERF.UV>write-LNK yesterday NOM woman
 ‘Today, the woman wrote a love letter yesterday.’

Thus, we have arrived at a semantic and syntactic account of event existentials, starting from possessive constructions which look superficially the same but are structurally and semantically distinct.

⁹ If these examples are interpreted as possessive constructions, then both are acceptable. The first would mean ‘He has a love letter (which was) written yesterday’ (M. Saclot, pers. comm.), and the second would be ‘Today the woman has a love letter (which was) written yesterday’.

4 Conclusion

The crucial question facing the above analysis is, how well does it account for the distinctive properties of event existential constructions mentioned in §1? Each of the points raised in §1 will be addressed below.

The event existential interpretation follows from the reanalysis of the (constructional) possessive semantic representation in (28)-(30). Because much of the meaning is constructional, syntactic reanalysis has profound semantic consequences. Moreover, the semantic representation in (30) accounts both for the assertion of the existence of an event and also the existence of an entity, the undergoer of the embedded verb, yielding the required specific interpretation. Given the ambiguity inherent in (1) and (17), it is important to not only account for the event existential reading but to relate the two interpretations to each other.

The actor in this construction, *babae* ‘woman’ in (1) and *bata* ‘child’ in (17), is marked by *ang*, because it is an argument in the matrix core (see Figure 3.3) and therefore its case is not determined by the voice of the embedded predicate.

That the predicate in the embedded core must be in undergoer voice is due to the reanalysis of the possessor as the actor of the embedded predicate. Kroeger (1993) argues that the controllee in a control construction in Tagalog must be the actor argument, regardless of the voice of the verb,¹⁰ and this means that the only role open to the other argument of the verb is undergoer. Since the construction derives from a restrictive relative clause and the modified RP is the trigger for the voice of the verb, this means that in the event existential the verb must always be in undergoer voice, if transitive. This predicts that in the possessive construction, in which the possessor is not necessarily the actor of the embedded verb, actor voice should be possible, and this is in fact the case, as (33) shows (from M. Saclot, personal communication).

- (33) *May t<um>akas na bilanggo ang sundalo.*
 EXIST <PERF.AV>escape LNK prisoner NOM soldier
 ‘The soldier has an escaped prisoner’/‘The soldier has a prisoner that escaped.’

Hence the restriction to undergoer voice follows from the origin of the construction in a restrictive relative clause plus the reanalysis of the possessor as the actor of the embedded verb.

The undergoer of *bili* is marked not with the expected nominative, based on the voice of the embedded predicate, but rather by the linker *na/ng*, which does not normally function as a case marker but rather links modifiers to heads normally. This reflects in part the relationship of the event existential to the possessive construction, since in the possessive construction the modified noun in the relative clause is signaled by the linker. The embedded core in Figure 3.3 serves as the pivot of the existential construction, and therefore *ang* is ruled out because of the Definiteness Effect (Sabbagh 2009). This is reinforced by the semantic representation in (30), in which *laruan* ‘toy’ is the argument of **exist**. The case marker *ng* is incompatible with the voice marking on the predicate. The occurrence of the linker is a remnant of the origin of the embedded core as an internally-headed relative clause, and it cannot be replaced by a true case marker due to the incompatibilities given above.

Extraction is predicted to be possible out of the embedded core by the RRG theory of extraction constraints (Van Valin 1995, 2005). These restrictions apply to embedded clauses, not to embedded cores. The structure in Figure 3.3 therefore satisfies the con-

¹⁰ There are some exceptional circumstances in which this is not the case, as Kroeger points out, but none of these are relevant to this construction.

straints governing extraction in complex sentences, while the structure in (2), which is the same as (34), does not satisfy these conditions.

(34) *May* [RP *libro-ng* [CLAUSE *ib<in>igay ng babae sa lalaki*]].
 EXIST book-LNK <PERF.UV>give GEN woman DAT man
 ‘There is a book which a/the woman gave to the man.’

(35) **Sa lalaki may* [RP *libro-ng* [CLAUSE *ib<in>igay ng babae*]].
 DAT man EXIST book-LNK <PERF.UV>give GEN woman
 *‘To the man there is a book that a/the woman gave.’

(36) *May* [CORE *ib<in>igay na libro sa lalaki*] *ang babae*.
 EXIST <PERF.UV>give LNK book DAT man NOM woman
 ‘The woman gave a book to the man.’ (‘There was the woman’s giving a book to the man.’)

(37) *Sa lalaki may* [CORE *ib<in>igay na libro*] *ang babae*.
 DAT man EXIST <PERF.UV>give LNK book NOM woman
 ‘To the man, the woman gave a book.’ (‘To the man, there was the woman’s giving a book’.)

Thus, the RRG analysis accounts for the distinctive attributes of the event existential construction specified in §1, and the key to the explanation is the relationship of the event existential to the possessive construction, both syntactically and semantically. We have hypothesized that the event existential derives from or arose out of a reanalysis of the possessive construction with a restrictive relative clause, and this seems to be true in a diachronic sense: the event existential appears to be an innovation that not all speakers have. Indeed, one of the four native speakers with whom we consulted does not accept the event existential readings for these forms, while another treats them as secondary and as inferences, and one somewhat surprisingly does not get the possession interpretation (see Appendix).

Appendix on Native Speaker Judgments

We have argued that the event existential developed from the possessive *may*-construction. Interestingly, the diverging grammaticality judgments of our consultants (one who left the Philippines a long time ago and presumably shows a more conservative pattern, and one who just recently left the Philippines and may exhibit innovative structures) seem to support this idea.

Table 1: Consultant judgments

	Interpretation of sentence a. May N _{LK} V ANG N b. May V _{LK} N ANG N	Allows for extraction	Allows for double Actors
Consultant 1	a. possessive b. possessive	a. no b. no	(a) yes (b) no
Consultants 2 and 3	a. eventive b. eventive	a. yes b. yes	(a) no (b) no
Consultant 4	a. possessive b. possessive/eventive	a. no b. yes	(a) yes (b) no

Consultant 1 only accepts *may*-sentences (possessive and eventive) as answers to questions regarding possession, while Consultants 2 and 3 treat both, eventive and possessive existentials, as answers to questions regarding someone’s actions. Consultant 4 strongly favors the possessive reading for all of these constructions, but acknowledges the eventive interpretations as a possible inference in some cases.

Their judgments with respect to extraction are in line with their respective interpretations of the sentence structures: Consultant 1 does not accept, while Consultants 2 and 3 do accept, extractions out of both sentences, as would be expected according to our analysis. Consultant 4 accepts extraction out of the structures with an eventive reading.

Their judgments with respect to double actor-sentences are also in line with their respective interpretations and at the same time show one common ground. Consultant 1 accepts double actors (i.e. a possessor and an actor), but only in sentences that exhibit possessive existential word order. The reasons given for this are two-fold: a) the *ni*-Actor is only unambiguously interpreted as an Actor if it follows the verb, otherwise it is interpreted as the Possessor of the object (therefore noun-verb-Actor order is easier to parse in the intended sense) b) longer restrictive relative clauses are hard to parse if they are realized internally (so they get extraposed resulting in the structure ‘*May RP ang RP na RC*’). Consultants 2 and 3 do not accept double Actor sentences. Consultant 4 accepts some double actor sentences.

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