Resolving the controversy over subject and voice in Tagalog
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1 Introduction

The syntax of Philippine languages, of which Tagalog is the most thoroughly studied, has several unusual characteristics that have challenged common linguistic concepts such as subject, voice, and active voice. This has led to controversies among linguists over the nature of the Philippine voice system that appear to have started with McKaughan (1958), and which have continued into the 21st century (Ross and Teng 2005). The following sentences from Schachter (1976:494–495) have been famously used to illustrate these unusual characteristics in Tagalog (interlinear glosses are mine, as they will be throughout this paper):\(^1\)

(1)  
\(a.\) Active voice\(^2\)

\[
\text{Mag–aalis } \text{ang babae } \text{ng bigas } \text{sa sako}
\]

\[
\text{ACT.IRR–NPFV–remove } \text{NOM woman GEN rice DAT sack}
\]

\[
\text{para sa } \text{bata}
\]

\[
\text{para sa } \text{bata}
\]

\[
\text{for DAT child}
\]

‘The woman will take rice out of a/the sack for a/the child.’

\(b.\) Direct passive voice

\[
\text{Aalis–in } \text{ng babae } \text{ang bigas } \text{sa sako}
\]

\[
\text{IRR–NPFV–remove–DPASS GEN woman NOM rice DAT sack}
\]

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\(^2\) The original example in Schachter (1976) has “mag–salis” instead of mag–aalis. According to English (1986:37), it is mag–alis that means ‘to remove’; according to Schachter and Otanes (1972:361–363), the corresponding form for irrealis mood, or “contemplative aspect” (Schachter and Otanes’ terminology) would be mag–aalis. “Mag–salis” is not found in English (1986). Furthermore, following Tagalog orthography, the hyphen suggests that a vowel is supposed to follow mag–. I have therefore corrected it here.
‘A/The woman will take the rice out of the sack for a/the child.’

c. **Indirect passive voice**

\[
\text{Aalis–an} \quad \text{ng babae ng bigas ang sako} \\
\text{Ø–A–alis–an} \quad \text{ng babae ng bigas ang sako} \\
\text{IRR–NPFV–remove–IPASS} \quad \text{GEN woman GEN rice NOM sack}
\]

‘A/The woman will take some rice out of the sack for the child.’

In each of the voices in (1), an affix on the verb (\textit{mag–, –in,} and \textit{–an} respectively) indicates which of the verb’s arguments must be in the nominative case. The nominative argument, indicated by the preposition \textit{ang}, is the subject. There can be at most one nominative argument, and therefore one subject, in a clause.

To linguists more familiar with Indo-European languages, Tagalog subjects seem unusual because of the variety of their semantic roles; given the flexibility of the voice system, often every argument of a Tagalog verb can be the subject in some voice, as (1a–c) illustrate. In fact, Schachter (1976) believes that an “argument in favor of identifying the actor as the subject may be built upon the fact . . . that the actor” — \textit{babae} ‘woman’ in (1a–c) — “is quite regularly translated by the surface subject of an active sentence in English.” On a more technical level, the subject seems difficult to identify in Tagalog because, in voices such as (1b) and (c), morphosyntactic properties that are commonly associated with subjects are split between the nominative argument (\textit{bigas} ‘rice’ in 1b and \textit{sako} ‘sack’ in 1c) and the actor (\textit{babae} ‘woman’ in 1b and c). Some linguists interpret this to mean that the nominative argument is not the subject; for example, Carrie-Duncan (1985) argues that the nominative NP is a topic, rather than a subject.
Because alternations like (1a–c) essentially differ by assigning the nominative case to different arguments, those who do not agree that the nominative marker indicates the subject relation do not see these alternations as affecting the assignment of syntactic relations at all. And since voice alternations must affect the assignment of syntactic relations, they do not see alternations such as (1a–c) as voice alternations. Even for linguists who identify the subject as the nominative argument, and who recognize (1a–c) as voices, the active voice seems difficult to identify, due to several unusual features. Unlike in most languages, in Tagalog, all voices are expressed by overt morphology; passive voices occur more frequently than the active voice; and, for some verbs, the active voice is either restricted in usage, or absent altogether.

These challenges have led to the use of idiosyncratic terminology specific to the literature on Philippine languages. This Philippinist terminological convention refers to subjects as “focus/topic,” thereby avoiding the term “voice.” It also refers to sentences such as those in (1a–c) respectively as “actor focus/topic,” “patient focus/topic,” and “direction focus/topic,” naming each voice after the semantic role of its subject. These terms replace the more mainstream terms “active voice,” “direct passive voice”, and “indirect passive voice.” Besides being labels for semantic roles, the terms “actor,” “patient,” and “direction” also have a syntactic significance: in the actor focus/topic (1a), “actor” refers to the nominative argument, “patient” refers to the genitive argument, and “direction” refers to the dative argument.

Despite the challenges Tagalog poses to the mainstream syntactic concepts of subject, voice, and active voice, these concepts should not be abandoned in favour of idiosyncratic ones specific to Philippine languages. These challenges have only arisen
because mainstream concepts are ill-defined, and difficult to apply unambiguously to
diverse languages. The solution, therefore, is to develop and follow simple, unambiguous
definitions of these mainstream concepts. While applying these definitions does require
examining the morphosyntax of a language in detail, they provide a clear path in
resolving controversies such as those that have plagued the Philippine literature.

In Section 2, I will argue in the following sections that the nominative argument is
the subject, that sentences such as (1a–c) are voice alternations, and that the actor
focus/topic should be properly identified as the active voice. This analysis emerges when
simple, unambiguous definitions of the relevant concepts are followed. The subject
should be defined as the grammatical relation with the greatest number of
morphosyntactic properties, or the most syntactically-privileged grammatical relation
(Manning 1996, Iordanskaja and Mel’čuk 2000). Then, in Section 3, I will define voice as
the modification to a verb’s diathesis (its mapping of semantic arguments to grammatical
relations) that nevertheless preserve the verb’s propositional meaning (Mel’čuk 2006).
Finally, in Section 4, I will define the active voice as the voice with the verb’s basic
diathesis, a diathesis that by some morphosyntactic means differentiates itself
categorically as the default diathesis of the verb. With these definitions, Tagalog will
emerge as a language with a fairly recognizable syntactic alignment that, while exhibiting
some unique features, does not require terminology that is completely different from
those used to describe the world’s other languages.
2 Subject

2.1 Defining subjecthood

There are three main analyses of Tagalog subjecthood in the literature. These three analyses are best illustrated by referring to (2a–b), which are reproduced from (1a–b), and which I analyzed as the active voice and the direct passive voice:

(2) a. Active voice
Mag–aalis ang babae ng bigas sa sako
Mag–a~alis ang babae ng bigas sa sako
ACT.IRR–NPFV–remove NOM woman GEN rice DAT sack
para sa bata
para sa bata
for DAT child
‘The woman will take rice out of a/the sack for a/the child.’

b. Direct passive voice
Aalis–in ng babae ang bigas sa sako
Ø–A~alis–in ng babae ang bigas sa sako
IRR–NPFV–remove–DPASS GEN woman NOM rice DAT sack
para sa bata
para sa bata
for DAT child
‘A/The woman will take the rice out of the sack for a/the child.’

The three analyses are as follows (adopted from Kroeger 1993):

1. Tagalog has no subject (Schachter 1976, Foley and Van Valin 1984);
2. Subject is the nominative argument in the active voice, and the corresponding genitive arguments in passives (babae in both 2a and b) (Carrie-Duncan 1985);
3. Subject is the nominative argument in both active and passive voices (babae in 2a and bigas in b) (Bloomfield 1917, Blake 1925, Shibatani 1988).

In order to determine which analysis is correct, it is necessary to settle on a clear definition of subject, a definition that can be straightforwardly applied to any language,
while being consistent with the traditional intuition of subjecthood. The first two analyses arise mainly from a vague characterization of the subject. The subject is often understood as referring to 1) the single core argument of intransitive clauses and the actor argument of transitive clauses, in accusative languages only (Ross and Teng 2005:752); or 2) the grammatical relation that possesses some sufficient number of the morphosyntactic properties typically associated with subjects (Keenan 1976). The first sense is incomplete; as given, it is circular, since a definition of subject is required to identify accusative languages in the first place. The second sense does not specify how many subject properties a subject must have; at best, it produces ambiguous decisions, characterizing grammatical relations merely as more or less subject-like. Specifically, it makes no pronouncements on what to do when some of these typical subject properties are found to belong to one grammatical relation, but other properties are found to belong to another. Such is the case in Tagalog.

Therefore, I will use an alternate definition: the subject of a language is the most syntactically-privileged syntactic relation (Mel’čuk 1988:161–162). This notion of the subject (also known as the “basic” subject) is the syntactic relation with the largest number of morphosyntactic properties in the “most current and simplest type of sentences” in a language, as well as the syntactic relation in other non-basic constructions that shares the most properties with this basic subject (Mel’čuk 1988:162–163). For the purposes of this paper, the subset of the “most current and simplest type of sentences” (also known as the basic sentence) that will be considered is the simple, declarative, finite, active voice clause, such as (2a). This definition is a refinement on past definitions of subject. The notion of the subject as the most privileged relation is explained in detail in
Mel’čuk (1988), who calls this the “Surface-Syntactic Subject”; it is also mentioned in Manning (1996:17).³ The practice of defining a basic sentence type in which to identify the subject appears in Keenan (1976). Schachter and Otanes (1972) also refer to a basic sentence to define “topic” (their name for the Tagalog subject).⁴ The definition in this paper does deviate somewhat from Mel’čuk (1988), who describes the most syntactically-privileged syntactic relation as one that has “(roughly) all” the morphosyntactic properties of all other syntactic relations, plus some that belong to it exclusively. This assumes that there will be a syntactic relation that fits this description, and is therefore a less widely-applicable criterion than the requirement to simply have the most properties.

Defining the subject this way has three major advantages: it is unambiguous (leaving little room for uncertainty), backwards-compatible (identifies most of the same subjects that linguists have historically recognized), and widely-applicable (can be applied to every language with grammatical relations). Its unambiguousness is made possible partly by its purely syntactic nature. Its compatibility with previously-identified subjects suggests that it captures the most essential, common aspect of the concept of subject, as it has been generally understood (for example, see its application to French in Iordanskaja and Mel’čuk 2000). Finally, its wide applicability stems both from the fact that it does not stipulate what specific properties subjects should have, and from the fact that there is almost always at least one syntactic relation that is the most privileged.

³ Manning (1996:19) believes that “an adequate linguistic theory also needs another notion of subjecthood — the more semantic one.” I, however, will restrict subjecthood to the purely syntactic definition, and regard any semantic correlations as merely correlates.
⁴ However, since Schachter and Otanes (1972) do not identify an active voice, they consider passive voices to be basic sentences as well.
2.2 Evaluating competing analyses of the Tagalog subject

We can now use this definition of subject to evaluate each of the three analyses. The first analysis claims that Tagalog has no subject. Such claims (e.g. Schachter 1996, Foley and Van Valin 1984) seem to be motivated by the absence of properties typical of subjects, in any Tagalog argument; that is, they adopt the subject definition from Keenan (1976). Linguists who avoid the term “subject” in Tagalog often label the nominative argument “topic” (Schachter and Otanes 1972, Schachter 1976) or “focus” (Foley and Van Valin 1984). With our current definition, however, subjects need not have any particular properties, but must simply have the greatest number. Thus, this avoidance of the term “subject” becomes unnecessary. Moreover, calling nominative arguments in Tagalog “focus” or “topic” is inaccurate and misleading; as Kroeger (1993:2–5) shows, they do not correspond to pragmatic focus or pragmatic topic. In any case, even if the nominative argument did resemble pragmatic focus or pragmatic topic, this would not prevent it from being the subject, as they are not mutually exclusive concepts (Mel’čuk 2006:245). Schachter, who himself uses the term Topic for the nominative argument, points out that he and other Philippinists only use the term consistently to mean that the nominative argument “is always ‘definite’” (1976:496–497). And definiteness, far from precluding subjecthood, is in fact often associated with it (Keenan 1976:319).

This leaves the second and third analyses. The second analysis claims that the subject is the actor, in all voices, while the third analysis claims that the subject is the nominative argument, in all voices. Since in the active voice the actor is also the nominative argument, both analyses agree that this nominative actor is the subject in the

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5 To be exact, Mel’čuk (2006:245) only observes that pragmatic focus and subject are not mutually exclusive, and does not mention pragmatic topic.
active voice. However, in passive voices, the two analyses differ: the second analysis chooses the non-nominal actor for the subject, while the third analysis chooses the non-actor nominative argument instead. To resolve this, we must determine which argument in passive voices shares the most syntactic properties with the basic subject. The basic subject is the active voice subject, or the nominative actor, whose properties include all those belonging to non-nominal actors (with the obvious exception of case), and all those belonging to the non-actor nominative arguments; thus, the task simplifies to determining which passive voice argument has the most morphosyntactic properties.

In their attempts to identify the passive voice subject, Schachter (1976), Kroeger (1993, 1993b), and Schachter (1996) have collectively examined 14 morphosyntactic properties. Below, I examine the data and argumentation these studies present for each property, and determine, where possible, which argument has that property.⁶

1. Relativization

An argument in a grammatical relation that is relativizable can become the head of a relative clause. When the verb in the relative clause is in the passive, it is its nominative argument, and not its actor, that can be relativized:

(3) a. batang binigyan ng lalake ng isda
    bata=ng Ø-b<in>igay–an ng lalake ng isda
    child=REL PFV~<R>give–IPASS GEN man GEN fish
    ‘the child who was given fish by the man’

⁶ Shibatani (1988:115–130) carries out a similar investigation into the subject of Cebuano, and also determines that the “topic” argument to be a subject.
b. *lalakeng binigyan ng isda ang bata
   lalake=ng Ø~b<in>igay–an ng isda ang bata
   man=REL PFV~<R>give–IPASS GEN fish NOM child
   ‘the man who gave fish to the child’

   (Kroeger 1993:6)

For the passive verb *binigyan ‘was given (something),’ only *bata ‘child,’ the nominative argument, can be relativized, as in (3a); the actor, *lalake ‘man,’ cannot, as shown in (3b).

Typologically, subjects are strongly associated with relativizability: according to Keenan and Comrie’s (1977) Accessibility Hierarchy, the subject is the most accessible grammatical relation for relativization. In other words, if only one argument can be relativized in a language, it is most likely the subject.

2. Target of non-polar questions

A grammatical relation that can be the target of non-polar questions can be filled by an interrogative pronoun. This is a property of the nominative argument, as the following passive-voice questions show:

(4)  *Ano ang binili mo?
    Ano ang Ø~b<in>ili–Ø mo
    what NOM PFV~<R>buy–DPASS 2SG.GEN
    ‘What did you buy?’

   (Schachter and Otanes 1972:507)

(5)  *Sino ba ang tinanong niya?
    Sino ba ang Ø~t<in>anong–Ø niya
    who.NOM Q NOM PFV~<R>ask–DPASS 3SG.GEN
    ‘Who(m) did he ask?’

   (Schachter and Otanes 1972:512)

The information being sought is represented by the nominative interrogative pronouns *ano ‘what’ in (4), and *sino ‘what’ in (5). The questions are formed with a cleft construction: an interrogative pronoun stands as the nominal predicate, while a headless

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7 Translation of (5b) is my own, since Kroeger (1993) provides none.
relative clause is the subject. Each headless relative clause targets the nominative argument of the verb: in (4), the headless relative clause is _ang binili mo_, literally ‘the one you (sg.) bought.’ Thus the nominative argument of _binili_ (passive of _bumili_ ‘buy’) is relativized, and _ano_, as the nominal predicate, refers to it. Similarly, in (5), the headless relative clause is _ang tinanong niya_, literally ‘the one he asked’; the nominative argument of _tinanong_ (passive of _magtanong_ ‘ask’) is relativized, and _sino_, as the nominal predicate, refers to it. It is thus the nominative argument that is the target of non-polar questions.

Though far more infrequent, it is also possible in Tagalog for actors to be targets in passive-voice in situ non-polar questions (e.g., 2a–c). Schachter and Otanes (1972:505,512) notes that this question construction is far less frequent than the cleft construction. The following two passive-voice questions illustrate this below:

(6) a. _Binasa ni Jeff ang ano?_
   \[ \text{Ø~B<in>asa–Ø ni Jeff ang ano} \]
   \[ \text{PFV~<R>read–DPASS GEN Jeff NOM what.NOM} \]
   ‘What did Jeff read?’
   (Mayr 2006 example 3, in Gerassimova and Sells 2008:195)

In contrast with the cleft construction of (5), the structure of (6a) is that of a basic sentence (e.g., 1a–c): (6a) begins with a verb _binasa_ ‘read’, followed by the verb’s arguments. And, also in contrast with the cleft construction, the genitive agentive complement can also be the target of non-polar questions in this basic sentence syntax, as can be seen in (6b):

b. _Ginawa nino ang sapatos na iyon?
   \[ \text{Ø~G<in>awa–Ø nino ang sapatos na iyon} \]
   \[ \text{PFV~<R>make–DPASS who.GEN NOM shoe REL that} \]
   ‘Who made those shoes?’ (lit. ‘those shoes were made by whom?’)
   (Schachter and Otanes 1972:512)
In (6b), the target is expressed by the interrogative pronoun *nino*, which is the genitive-case actor. This is not an option for non-polar questions with the cleft construction. Thus, questions in the declarative word order do not uniquely target actors or nominative arguments, and are therefore irrelevant to our current task of determining whether actors or nominative arguments are subjects. Only non-polar questions in cleft construction, whose usage appears to be more general, differentiate between the actors and the nominative arguments for their targets, and there it is the nominative arguments that are always the targets.

3. Quantifier float

An argument in a grammatical relation with the property known as “quantifier float” in Kroeger (1993b:22) is an argument that can be modified by a quantifier that is not adjacent to any argument, but is adjacent to the verb. In Tagalog, the quantifier *lahat* ‘all’ can sometimes appear separate from all noun phrases, as in (7):

(7) Sinusulat lahat ng mga bata ang mga liham
S<in>u~sulat–Ø lahat ng mga bata ang mga liham
<R>NPFV~write all GEN PL child NOM PL letter
‘The/Some children write all the letters.’
*‘All the children are writing letters.’
(Schachter 1976:501, in Kroeger 1993:5)

In (7), *lahat* ‘all’ is separate from both *mga bata* ‘children’ and *mga liham* ‘letters’ (its separation from *mga bata* is evidenced by its position in front of the genitive marker *ng*; see Schachter and Otanes 1972:147–148 for details). However, *lahat* can only be interpreted as a modifier of the nominative argument *mga liham*, and not the actor *mga bata*. Schachter and Otanes (1972:148) also state that *lahat* always refers to the
nominative argument, despite being a syntactic modifier of the verb. This is therefore another property that belongs to the nominative argument in a passive voice.

4. Control of secondary predicates

“Secondary predicates” (Kroeger 1993b:30) refer to adjectives that are not adjacent to the nominal arguments they modify, but follow the verb and the linking particle \textit{na}. A grammatical relation has this property — which Kroeger (1993b:30) refers to as “control of secondary predicates” — if its argument can be semantically modified by a secondary predicate. Kroeger (1993:7) gives the following examples of secondary predicates:

(8) a. Inihain na hilaw ni Maria ang isda
   \begin{verbatim}
   I-ni-Ø-hain na hilaw ni Maria ang isda
   DPASS-<R>-PFV-serve LNK raw GEN Maria NOM fish
   \end{verbatim}
   ‘Maria served the fish raw. (The fish was raw)’

   b. #Inihain na lasing ni Maria ang isda
   \begin{verbatim}
   I-ni-Ø-hain na lasing ni Maria ang isda
   DPASS-<R>-PFV-serve LNK drunk GEN Maria NOM fish
   \end{verbatim}
   ‘Maria served the fish drunk. (The fish was drunk)’

   #Maria served the fish drunk. (The fish was drunk)’

The secondary predicates in these examples are \textit{hilaw} ‘raw’ in (8a), and \textit{lasing} ‘drunk’ in (8b). Both follow the verb \textit{inhain} ‘served’ and the linker \textit{na}. In both sentences, the secondary predicates apply to \textit{isda} ‘fish,’ the nominative argument, and not to \textit{Maria}, the actor. This is true even when the secondary predicate can only modify the actor without resulting in a strange meaning; thus, in (8b), \textit{lasing} cannot be interpreted as modifying the actor \textit{Maria} (i.e. Maria is drunk), even though it would make sense. Instead, the only possible interpretation is the strange one, that \textit{lasing} modifies the nominative argument.
isda (i.e. the fish is drunk). This shows that it is nominative arguments, and not agentive complements, that can be modified by secondary predicates.

5. Subject elision in coordinate clauses

An argument in a coordinate clause can undergo subject elision in coordinate clauses — what Kroeger (1993b:33) refers to as “conjunction reduction” — if it can be elided in one of the clauses, with the resulting gap referring to an argument from the other clause (Kroeger 1993:8). This is illustrated in (9a–b):

(9) a. Huhugasan ko at pupunasan
   H<Ø>u~hugas–an ko at p<Ø>u~punas–an
   <IRR>NPFV~wash–DPASS 1SG.GEN and <IRR>NPFV~wipe–DPASS
   mo ang mga pinggan
   mo ang mga pinggan
   2SG.GEN NOM PL dish
   ‘I will wash and you will dry the dishes.’

   b. ?*Niluto ang pagkain at hinugasan
      Ni–Ø~luto–Ø ang pagkain at Ø~h<in>ugas–an ang
      R–PFV~cook–DPASS NOM food and PFV~<R>wash–DPASS NOM
      mga pinggan ni Josie
      mga pinggan ni Josie
      PL dish GEN Josie
      ‘The food was cooked and the dishes were washed by Josie.’
      (Kroeger 1993:8)

In (9a), the nominative argument ang mga pinggan ‘the dishes’ can be elided in the first component clause, huhugasan ko ‘I will wash’; however, in (9b), the actor Josie cannot be similarly omitted from the clause niluto ang pagkain ‘the food was cooked.’ Kroeger (1993) therefore concludes that this property belongs to the nominative argument.

Kroeger (1993) argues that this is not simply an instance of pro-drop, a general phenomenon in some languages where, instead of being referenced by a pronoun,
“virtually any” argument can be optionally elided. He argues that conjunction reduction differs from pro-drop in that a conjunction reduction can occur before or after the argument it refers to, while pro-drop requires an elision to occur after the argument it refers to — that is, pro-drop must be anaphoric and conjunction reduction can be cataphoric. Thus, Kroeger (1993) claims that (9b) cannot be an example of pro-drop, and must be an example of conjunction reduction, because the actor *Josie* is elided before it is expressed. Since he claims (9b) is ungrammatical, conjunction reduction cannot apply to actors.

Schachter (1996:11), however, disputes Kroeger’s (1993) grammaticality judgment, claiming that (9b) is grammatical for his consultant. He also appears to disagree with Kroeger’s (1993) distinction between conjunction reduction and pro-drop, contending that the elision of arguments occurs quite generally in Tagalog. Schachter therefore considers this property irrelevant for Tagalog subjects.

Schachter’s (1996) grammaticality judgment of (9b) has two possible implications: either conjunction reduction is allowed for all arguments, nominative or not; or pro-drop is allowed even before the reference argument is expressed — that is, pro-drop can be cataphoric — thus implying that the sentences in (9) do not illustrate anything about conjunction reduction. In either case, Schachter (1996) and Kroeger’s (1993) disagreement on grammaticality judgment precludes making any decision about whether or not this property, if it exists, singles out any particular grammatical relation.
6. Subject elision in subordinate clauses

An argument in a subordinate clause undergoes subject elision in subordinate clauses — what Kroeger (1993b:31) refers to as “subject obviation” — if it is obligatorily or optionally elided, with the resulting gap referring to some argument in the independent clause. This is illustrated in (10a–b):

\[(10) \begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{Tinanong ni Derek si Marvin, bago umalis} \\
& \text{Ø~T<in>anong–Ø ni Derek si Marvin bago um–Ø~alis} \\
& \text{<R>PFV–ask–DPASS GEN Derek NOM Marvin before ACT–PFV~leave} \\
& \text{‘Derek asked Marvin before (he) left. (Marvin left)’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[(10) \begin{align*}
\text{b. } & \text{Nagtanong si Derek kay Marvin, bago umalis} \\
& \text{Nag–tanong si Derek kay Marvin bago um–Ø~alis} \\
& \text{<R>PFV–ask–DPASS NOM Derek DAT Marvin before ACT–PFV~leave} \\
& \text{‘Derek asked Marvin before (he) left. (Derek left)’}
\end{align*}\]

(Kroeger 1993b:31–32)

Here, Kroeger (1993b:31) claims that the implied argument of \textit{umalis} ‘left’ is optionally elided. The resulting gap refers to the nominative argument, \textit{Marvin}, and not the actor, \textit{Derek}, in both (10a) and (b). Thus, he argues that this is another property of the nominative argument.

However, Schachter (1996:10) reports that his consultant interprets (10a) and (b) as being actually ambiguous about who left. Furthermore, Schachter (1996) claims that the optional elision is due to pro-drop (or “zero anaphora,” as he calls it), which he understands to be applicable to any argument. This implies that subject obviation is not a separate syntactic property.

As with conjunction reduction, Schachter and Kroeger’s disagreement about the data precludes a decision on whether subject obviation, if it exists, applies to the nominative argument or the actor.
7. Equi/Control

An argument in a complement clause has the property known either as \textit{equi} (Kroeger 1993b:38) or \textit{control} (Schachter 1996:21), if it can be controlled by some argument in the matrix clause. This is illustrated in (11):

(11) Nag–atubili siyang hiramin ang pera
Nag–Ø~atubili siya=ng hiram–in ang pera
ACT.R–PFV~hesitate 3SG.NOM=COMP borrow–DPASS NOM money
sa bangko
sa bangko
DAT bank

‘He hesitated to borrow money from the bank.’ (Schachter 1976:514)

In (11), the actor argument slot of hiramin ‘to be borrowed’ is controlled by siya ‘3SG.NOM’; this means that siya, already expressed in the matrix verb, nag–atubili, is also automatically interpreted as the actor of the complement clause verb, hiramin, but is not repeated in the complement clause. Thus, as Schachter (1976) argues, equi is a property of the actor argument irrespective of its (potential) morphological case in the complement clause.

However, there is a type of verb which, as the head of a complement clause and in a passive voice, can allow its nominative argument to be controlled by an argument of the matrix verb. These are what Schachter and Otanes (1972:330) call “ability/involuntary-action verbs,” and what Kroeger (1993b) calls verbs in “non-volitive mood;” Schachter (1996) calls these “resultative verbs.” Here, they will be referred to as AIA verbs, as the abbreviation of the original term in Schachter and Otanes (1972). AIA verbs can differ semantically from non-AIA verbs in various ways, but they generally differ by expressing an action which may be intentional or not, but which is certain to occur (Kroeger 1993b).
Generally, AIA verbs have the same voices as the non-AIA verbs from which they are derived. The following sentences illustrate complement clauses with passive AIA verbs:

(12)  Inutusan ko si Mariang mahalikan
      In–Ø~utus–an ko si Maria=ng ma–halik–an
      R–PFV~order–IPASS ISG.GEN NOM Maria=COMP AIA–kiss–IPASS
      ni Ben
      ni Ben
      GEN Ben

‘I ordered Maria (to allow herself) to be kissed by Pedro.’
(Kroeger 1993b:95)

(13)  Nag–atubili si Mariang mabigyan ng pera
      Nag–Ø–atubili si Maria=ng ma–bigay–an ng pera
      ACT.R–PFV~hesitate NOM Maria=COMP AIA–give–IPASS GEN money
      ni Ben
      ni Ben
      GEN Ben

‘Maria hesitated (to allow herself) to be given money by Ben.’
(Kroeger 1993b:95)

According to Kroeger (1993b), the matrix verb *inutusan* ‘ordered’ in (12) has obligatory control, meaning that one of its arguments always controls an argument in the complement clause; *nag–atubili* ‘hesitated’ in (13), meanwhile, has non-obligatory control, meaning that there may be no controller in its complement clause. In both examples, it is the nominative argument in the complement clause that is controlled. Both are controlled by *Maria* in the matrix clause, and neither is the actor.

Schachter (1996) concurs that non-actor nominative arguments can be controlleres in complement clauses with AIA verbs. However, Schachter shows that non-nominative

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8 As an example of a sentence with *nag–atubili* ‘hesitated’ that has no controller in its complement clause, Kroeger (1993b) gives this example:

(i)  Nag–atubili si Mariang hiramin ni Ben ng pera
    Nag–Ø–atubili si Maria=ng hiram–in ni Ben ng pera
    ACT.R–PFV~hesitate NOM Maria=COMP borrow–DPASS GEN Ben GEN money

‘Maria hesitated for Ben to borrow the money.’
(Kroeger 1993b:92)
actors of AIA verbs can also be controlled, a possibility that Kroeger (1993b) does not acknowledge:

(14) Inutusan ko si Mariang mailuto
In–Ø–utus–an ko si Maria=ng ma–i–luto
R–PFV~order–IPASS 1SG.GEN NOM Maria=COMP AIA–DPASS–cook
ang pagkain pagdating ko
ang pagkain pag–dating ko
NOM food GER–arrive 1SG.GEN
‘I ordered Maria to get the food cooked by the time I arrived.’
(Schachter 1996:24)

Here in (14), in the complement clause, the non-nominative actor of the direct-passive AIA verb mailuto is controlled by Maria, in the matrix clause.

Finally, there is another type of control that Kroeger (1993b) puts forth as grammatical, but which Schachter (1996) deems ungrammatical. This is the case where the complement clause has a passive non-AIA verb, and where the controllee is a non-actor nominative argument:

(15) Nagpilit si Mariang bigyan ng pera ni Ben
Nag–Ø–pilit si Maria=ng bigay–an ng pera ni Ben
ACT.R–NPFV~insist.on NOM Maria=COMP give–IPASS GEN money GEN Ben
‘Maria insisted on being given money by Ben.’

(16) ?Hinimok ni Maria si Juang suriin
H<in>imok–Ø ni Maria si Juan=ng suri–in
<R>PFV~persuade–DPASS GEN Maria NOM Juan=COMP examine–DPASS
ng bagong doktor
ng bago=ng doctor
GEN new=REL doctor
‘Maria persuaded Juan to be examined by the new doctor.’

In (15), the controller Maria in the matrix clause controls the nominative argument of the passive complement clause verb bigyan, and not its actor, Ben. Similarly, in (16), the controller Juan in the matrix clause controls the nominative argument of the passive
complement clause verb *suriin*. Schachter (1996) reports that his consultant finds (16) ungrammatical; in fact, even Kroeger (1993) notes that its grammaticality has been questioned. However, Schachter (1996) does not address the grammaticality of other such examples, such as (15).

To summarize, in complement clauses with non-AIA verbs, there is consensus, at least between Schachter and Kroeger, that the actor can be the controllee; however, the data showing that the non-actor nominative argument can also be the controllee is in dispute. Meanwhile, in complement clauses with passive AIA verbs, the nominative argument is uncontroversially the controllee, though there is some evidence that actors can also be controlled. It thus appears likely that equi/control cannot be applied to subjecthood in Tagalog, since it does not seem to belong uniquely to either the nominative argument or the non-nominative actor. In any case, at present the validity of some of the data is in dispute, and further study is required.

8. Reflexivization

A grammatical relation has the property referred to as “reflexivization” in Schachter (1996:20) and “reflexive binding” in Kroeger (1993b:36), if its argument can be the antecedent of a reflexive pronoun. Schachter (1976:512) claims that this is a property of the agentive complement:

(17) a. Iniisip nila ang kanilang sarili.
    In–i–isip–Ø nila ang kanila=ng sarili
    R–NPFV–think–DPASS 3PL.GEN NOM 3PL.DAT=LNK self
    ‘They think about themselves.’

In (17a), a passive sentence, *nila ‘3PL.GEN,’* which is the agentive complement, is the antecedent of the reflexive pronoun *kanilang sarili ‘themselves.’* However, as (17b)
shows below, the nominative argument *sila* ‘3PL.NOM’ cannot be the antecedent of a reflexive pronoun; control of the reflexive pronoun is not simply given to the argument that occurs first in the clause.

(17) b. *Iniisip sila ng kanilang sarili.

In–i~isip–Ø sila ng kanila=ng sarili
R–NPFV–think–DPASS 3PL.NOM GEN 3PL.DAT=LNK self

(18)  ... siya’y hinahatulan ng kaniyang sarili

siya=ay h<in>a~hatul–an ng kaniya=ng sarili
3SG.NOM=TOP NPFV<R~>judge–IPASS GEN 3SG.DAT=LNK self
‘... they are self-condemned.’

In (18), the nominative argument *siya* ‘3SG.NOM’ is the theme, but nevertheless controls the reflexive pronoun, which is the actor and semantic agent. This shows that nominative arguments of passive voices can also control reflexive pronouns. However, further investigation is necessary to establish whether or not this is still possible in contemporary Tagalog (even as a literary usage), and whether or not this is only possible with topicalization.

9. Raising

An argument can undergo *raising* if it can be expressed as a syntactic argument of a matrix clause, when semantically it is an argument of a complement clause embedded inside that matrix clause.

Kroeger (1993b) claims that raising is a property of the nominative argument:
In (19a), the sentence without raising, *pambansang-awit* ‘national anthem’ is the nominative argument of the passive complement clause verb *awitin* (passive of *umawit* ‘sing’). In (19b), *pambansang-awit* is still a nominative argument, but now appears before the complementizer *na*, and thus appears to be a syntactic argument of the matrix verb, *inasahan* (passive of *umasa* ‘expect’). Meanwhile, (19c) shows that *Linda*, the actor of the complement clause, cannot be similarly raised.

As further evidence that the raised argument is a syntactic argument of the matrix clause, Kroeger (1993b:26) cites the following sentence:
In (20), *sila* ‘3PL.NOM,’ which if unraised would have been the nominative argument of
the complement clause verb *mag–aral* ‘study,’ is raised here into the matrix clause.
Although *mag–aral* is in the active voice, (20) shows that the raised argument is clearly a
syntactic argument of the matrix clause, not of the complement clause. As an argument
(as opposed to a predicate), *sila* occupies the second position in the clause it belongs to
(Schachter and Otanes 1972:183–193). Here, it occupies the second position in the matrix
clause, immediately following the clause-initial verb *gusto*, which shows that it belongs
syntactically to the matrix clause. In addition, *sila* is separated from the complement
clause by the matrix clause actor, *Nanay*, further demonstrating that it is no longer part of
the complement clause.

Finally, Kroeger (1993) concedes that non-nominative actors can be raised, but
that they then must leave behind a resumptive pronoun; he calls this *copy-raising*, and
does not consider it to be “true” raising:

(21) a. Gusto ko si Charlie na lutuin niya
    Gusto ko si Charlie na lutu–in niya
    want 1SG.GEN NOM Charlie COMP cook–DPASS 3SG.GEN

    ang suman
    ang suman
    NOM suman

    ‘I want Charlie to cook the suman.’
b. *Gusto ko si Charlie na lutuin ang suman
   Gusto ko si Charlie na lutu–in ang suman
   want 1SG.GEN NOM Charlie COMP cook–DPASS NOM suman
   *‘I want Charlie to cook the suman.’

In (21a), Charlie, the actor of the passive complement clause verb lutuin (passive of magluto ‘cook’), is raised to the matrix clause, but leaves behind the resumptive pronoun niya in its place in the complement clause. Kroeger (1993b) claims that the sentence is ungrammatical without the resumptive pronoun, as (21b) shows.

Schachter (1996) disputes Kroeger’s (1993b) grammaticality judgment in (19b), claiming that for his consultant, this sentence is grammatical. He also disputes Kroeger’s (1993b) grammaticality judgment in (21b), claiming that it, too, is grammatical for his consultant. These two facts, Schachter (1996) argues, show that the actor of the complement clause can also be raised.

Furthermore, Schachter (1996) suggests that what Kroeger (1993b) considers raising of the nominative argument is not raising, but another phenomenon which has been called “scrambling” (Ross 1968). Schachter (1996) claims that scrambling bears a resemblance to raising, and can easily be confused with it. However, in scrambling, the argument that appears to be raised to the matrix clause remains a syntactic argument of the complement clause, and remains in the same case; it is only the order of the elements in the clause that is changed. Schachter (1996:18) offers the following two sentences to illustrate:

(22) a. Nagpilit si Joe na magbigay ng pera
   ACT.R–NPFV–insist.on NOM Joe COMP ACT–give GEN money
   b. Nag–Ø–pilit si Joe na mag–bigay ng pera
   ACT.R–NPFV–insist.on NOM Joe COMP ACT–give GEN money
‘Joe insisted on giving Bob money.’

In (22a), Bob is the dative argument in the complement clause; in (b), Bob, still in the dative case, now appears in the matrix clause, being in front of the complementizer na.

Schachter (1996) suggests that (22b) is the result of the scrambling of the elements in the complement clause of (22a), and not of raising; this is despite the fact that the fronted argument Bob is separated from the rest of the complement clause by this complementizer. Since the nominative argument in the raising example cited by Kroeger (1993) (19b) retains the same case marking both inside and outside the complement clause, as does Bob in (22a–b), Schachter (1996) argues that (19a–b) may very well not be examples of raising, but of the more general phenomenon of scrambling. He claims that the only true examples of raising are those where a non-nominative actor argument in the complement clause is raised to the matrix clause and becomes a nominative argument, such as in (19c) and (21b), sentences which are judged ungrammatical by Kroeger (1993b).

Schachter’s (1996) interpretation of (22b) as the result of scrambling is a weak one, in the face of sentences such as (20); in (20), not only is the raised pronominal argument, sila, syntactically separated from the complement clause by another argument (Nanay), but it is also in its customary second position in the matrix clause, not the complement clause. This shows that sila behaves like a syntactic argument of the matrix
clause, and not the complement clause. Thus, Schachter’s (1996) resort to the phenomenon of scrambling does not convincingly counter Kroeger’s (1993b) claim that nominative arguments can be raised.

Unfortunately, based on the available evidence, the result of this debate on raising is inconclusive. Even if the raising of the nominative argument of the complement clause to the matrix clause should not be described as an instance of scrambling, as Schachter (1996) suggests, but rather as an instance of raising, as Kroeger (1993b) argues. Kroeger’s (1993b) evidence that actors cannot be raised, however, is disputed by Schachter’s (1996) consultant’s grammaticality judgments of (21c) and (23b). Thus, this property cannot be assigned definitively to either the nominative argument or the actor, and further investigation is necessary.

10. Ay-inversion

An argument has the property known as “ay-inversion” if it can be placed in the front of the clause, followed by the topic marker ay. The argument undergoing ay-inversion behaves as a pragmatic topic (Kroeger 1993:5), though the construction is often associated with a more formal style. This is a generally a property of the nominative argument (Schachter and Otanes 1972:485), as illustrated by the following sentence:

(23) Ang sulat ay tinanggap ko kahapon.

‘I received the letter yesterday.’

(Schachter and Otanes 1972:486)

In (23), it is the nominative argument sulat ‘letter,’ and not the actor ko ‘1SG.GEN,’ that can be topicalized with ay.
There is one exception to nominative arguments being the topic with *ay*; a non-nominative actor must be topicalized with *ay* if it occurs with *ni* ‘not even,’ or in the construction *ni ... ni ... ‘neither ... nor ... ’* (Schachter and Otanes 1972:492):


   Ni si Pedro ay hindi ma–bu~buhat–Ø ito
   not NOM Pedro TOP NEG AIA.IRR–NPFV~lift–DPASS this.NOM
   ‘Not even Pedro can lift this.’

b. Ni si Juan ni si Ben ay hindi bibilhin

   Ni si Juan ni si Ben ay hindi b<Ø>i~bili–in
   not NOM Juan not NOM Ben TOP NEG <IRR>NPFV~buy–DPASS

   iyan, iyan
   that.NOM
   ‘Neither Juan nor Ben will buy that.’

In (24a), *Pedro*, which is the non-nominative actor of the verb *mabubuhat* (irrealis and passive form of *makabuhat* ‘can lift’), appears as the *ay*-inverted topic. In (24b), *Juan* and *Ben* are the non-nominative actors of *bibilhin* (passive and irrealis of *bumili* ‘buy’), but are also the *ay*-inverted topic. Despite the exception of this one construction, it is the nominative argument that can generally be *ay*-inverted, and which should therefore claim *ay*-inversion as a property. This exception can be better described as belonging to the construction itself, rather than to actor arguments in general.


11. Possessor Topicalization

An argument has the property of *possessor topicalization*, which Kroeger (1993b:32) and Schachter (1996:8) refer to as “possessor ascension,” if this argument can
have a possessor expressed as a preposed topic, while it itself remains in its original
syntactic position in the clause. This is a property of the possessor of the nominative
argument, as illustrated in (25a–b):

(25) a. Si Juan, kinagat ng aso ang anak
   Si Juan Ø~k<in>agat–Ø ng aso ang anak
   ‘Juan, a dog bit the (i.e. his) child.’

   b. *Si Juan, kumagat ang aso sa anak
      Si Juan Ø~k<um>agat ang aso sa anak
      ‘Juan, the dog bit the (i.e. his) child.’

Kroeger (1993:7–8)

The fact that in (25a) the preposed nominal Juan is understood to be the possessor of
anak ‘child,’ and not of aso ‘dog,’ means that only the possessor of a nominative
argument can be topicalized. In (25b), the topicalized Juan cannot be interpreted as the
possessor of anak, since anak is no longer the nominative argument.9 Kroeger (1993b)
thus claims that the evidence indicates that the property of possessor ascension belongs to
the nominative argument, and Schachter (1996:8) concurs with Kroeger (1993b) in this
conclusion.10

9 In (25b), Juan cannot be interpreted as the possessor of the nominative argument aso; this is due to
various restrictions on the usage of this syntactic pattern, one of which appears to be that the possessed
argument must be in some sense affected by the action (Kroeger 1993b:32).
10 Schachter (1996:8–9) adds that possessor topicalization can apply to the possessor of nominal predicates:

(i) Si Juan, kakwarto si Bob
    NOM Juan roommate NOM Bob
    ‘Juan, Bob is his roommate.’

Here, Juan, who is the possessor of the nominal predicate kakwarto, is preposed as a topic. However, this is
not important to the current question of whether the nominative argument or the actor is the subject.
12. Addressee of imperatives

An argument is the “addressee of imperatives” if it can express the second-person addressee in an imperative. In passives, the addressee of imperatives is expressed by the actor, as Schachter (1976:506) shows:

(26) a. Magbigay ka sa kaniya ng kape
   Mag–bigay ka sa kaniya ng kape
   ACT–give 2SG.NOM DAT 3SG.DAT GEN coffee
   ‘Give him some coffee.’

b. Bigyan mo siya ng kape
   Bigay–an mo siya ng kape
   give–IPASS 2SG.GEN 3SG.NOM GEN coffee
   ‘Give him some coffee.’

c. Ibigay mo sa kaniya ang kape
   I–bigay mo sa kaniya ang kape
   DPASS–give 2SG.GEN DAT 3SG.DAT NOM coffee
   ‘Give him the coffee.’

In (26a), an active voice sentence, the addressee is the actor and nominative pronoun *ka* ‘2SG.NOM.’ In (26b–c), the imperatives are in passive voices, with the addressee being expressed by the actor, the genitive pronoun *mo* ‘2SG.GEN.’ This shows that the actor is the addressee of imperatives.

13. Verb number agreement

An argument has the property verb number agreement – referred to as simply “number agreement” in Schachter (1976) and Kroeger (1993, 1993b), if it can optionally have its plurality reflected on the verb. Verb number agreement in Tagalog occurs, also optionally, in some adjectival predicates (Schachter and Otanes 1972:235) and active-voice verbs (Schachter and Otanes 1972:334–336). Schachter (1976) uses this property as
evidence that the nominative actor might be considered the subject in Tagalog. The following sentence illustrates this property:

(27)  Nagsipagluto sila ng pagkain  
      Nag–sipag–luto sila ng pagkain
      ACT.R–PL–cook 3PL.NOM GEN food
      ‘They cooked some food.’

      (Schachter 1976:510)

In (27), the active voice verb nagsipagluto ‘cook’ has the plural prefix sipag–, which agrees with the plurality of the nominative actor sila ‘3PL.NOM.’

However, Kroeger (1993b) claims that passive verbs can also agree in number with their nominative arguments, and that (28a) is an example:

(28)  a. Pinagbubuksan niya ang lahat ng mga bintana  
      P<in>ag–Ø~bu~bukas–an niya ang lahat ng mga bintana
      PL<CR>~PRF~PL~open~DPASS 3SG.GEN NOM all GEN PL window
      ‘She had opened all the windows.’


      Kroeger (1993:6) claims that in the verb pinagbubuksan ‘open,’ the prefix pag– and the reduplication of the first syllable of the verb (bu~) together indicate agreement in plurality with the nominative non-actor, lahat ng mga bintana, the only plural argument in the sentence.

      Schachter (1996), however, counters that the morphology on pinagbubuksan that Kroeger (1993:6) claims expresses plurality actually expresses intensive action. This is supported by the fact that it can be used even with a singular nominative argument:

(28)  b. Pinagbubuksan at pinagsasara  
      P<in>ag–Ø~bu~bukas–an at p<in>ag–Ø~sa~sara–Ø
      INT<CR>~PRF~INT~open~DPASS and INT<CR>~PRF~INT~close~DPASS
In (28b), *pinagbubuksan*, the same verb in (24) that Kroeger (1993b) claims to have plural agreement with the nominative argument, now takes a singular nominative argument, *bintana* ‘window.’

Optional number agreement also occurs in adjectival predicates (Schachter 1972:229–231). Schachter (1996:14–15) offers the following examples:

(29) a. Napakatalino ni Armand
   Napaka–talino ni Armand
   INT–bright GEN Armand
   ‘Armand is very bright.’

   b. Napakatatalino ng mga batang Intsik
      Napaka–ta~talino ng mga bata=ng Intsik
      INT–PL~bright GEN PL child=LNK China
      ‘The Chinese children are very bright.’

Schachter claims that in (29a–b), the subjects¹¹ (*Armand* in 31a, and *mga batang Intsik* in b) are actors. Semantically, he claims this because he understands the term “actor” to be a “macrorole” that encompasses the subject of adjectival predicates, in the same way that they include the subjects of intransitive verbs; morphologically, he claims this because actors also appear in the genitive case, in passive voices.

Schachter’s (1996) example, (28b), does clearly show that the verb *pinagbubuksan* in (28a) does not actually agree with plural nominative arguments.

However, he fails in his argument that the plural subject in (29b) is an actor, and in his implication that its ability to trigger agreement on the adjectival predicate *napakatatalino*

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¹¹ I refer to these arguments as subjects here without justification, since they are arguments of adjectival predicates, which have no voice alternation.
can therefore be generalized to the behaviour of actors in passive voices. First, adjectival predicates do not have voice alternation, and are therefore irrelevant to the current comparison between the nominative argument and the actor in passive voices. Second, his decision to consider the subjects of adjectival predicates as actors in the semantic sense does not imply that their number agreement property can be generalized to actors of passive voice verbs. Finally, the genitive case is not unique to actors, and the fact that the genitive argument in (29b) triggers number agreement does not mean that other genitive arguments will have the same property.

Therefore, the evidence shows that number agreement only occurs in adjectival predicates and active-voice verbs, constructions where the identity of the subject is not in dispute; as for the identity of the subject in passive voices, which is the task at hand, this property is irrelevant.

2.3 Summary

The results from the assessments of each property, in Schachter (1976), Kroeger (1993, 1993b), Schachter (1996), as well as this current study, are given in Table 1:

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<td>1. relativization</td>
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<td>3. quantifier float</td>
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<td>4. control of secondary predicates</td>
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<td>5. subject elision in coordinate clauses</td>
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<td>6. subject elision in subordinate clauses</td>
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<td>7. equi/control</td>
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<td>8. reflexivization</td>
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<td>9. raising</td>
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<td>10. ay-topicalization</td>
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<td>11. possessor topicalization</td>
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The label ‘NOM’ indicates that a particular study (indicated in the column heading) concludes that the property (indicated by the row) belongs to the nominative argument; ‘ACT’ indicates that the study concludes that the property belongs to the actor; and ‘ACT,NOM’ indicates that the study concludes that property belongs to both arguments in different constructions. A question mark (‘?’) indicates that the possessor of the property cannot as yet be decided, due to conflicting data; a dash (‘—’) indicates that the study considers this property irrelevant for the purposes of this section; and blanks indicate that the study does not take that property into consideration.

The assessment in this section shows that the majority of the examined morphosyntactic properties in passive voice clauses belong to the nominative argument. Of the 13 properties, eight belong to either the nominative argument or the actor: of these, six belong exclusively to the nominative argument, while only two belong exclusively to the actor. Among the remaining six properties, four are deemed inconclusive due to conflicting data, while one is deemed irrelevant in Tagalog passives.

Of the five properties that have been ascribed to the actor argument in at least one study, two (equi/control and raising) are inconclusive, while one (verb number agreement) have been found to be irrelevant to Tagalog subjecthood; only two (reflexivization and addressee of imperatives) has been found to firmly belong to the actor argument. The problematic properties, most of which are typically associated with subjects in other

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12 Schachter (1976) considers verb number agreement as a property for the “actor-topic,” which refers to the nominative argument in the active voice.
languages (Keenan 1976), have been the main source of the confusion over subjecthood in Tagalog.

Thus, the nominative argument emerges clearly as the subject in passive voices. Such clarity is possible thanks to the simplicity in defining the subject as the most syntactically-privileged relation.

3 Voice

In addition to the controversy over the identity of the subject in passive voices, there is also disagreement in the literature over the nature of the verb alternations in (30a–c, reproduced from 1a–c), which were presented in the introduction, and which are reproduced below:

(30) a. Active voice
Mag–aalis ang babae ng bigas sa sako
Mag–a~alis ang babae ng bigas sa sako
\[\text ACT.IRR–NPFV–remove} \ \text NOM} \ \text woman} \ \text GEN} \ \text rice} \ \text DAT} \ \text sack\]

\[\text para sa} \ \text bata\]
\[\text para sa} \ \text bata\]
\[\text for} \ \text DAT} \ \text child\]

‘The woman will take rice out of a/the sack for a/the child.’

b. Direct passive voice
Aalis–in ng babae ang bigas sa sako
Ø–A~alis–in ng babae ang bigas sa sako
\[\text IRR–NPFV–remove–DPASS} \ \text GEN} \ \text woman} \ \text NOM} \ \text rice} \ \text DAT} \ \text sack\]

\[\text para sa} \ \text bata\]
\[\text para sa} \ \text bata\]
\[\text for} \ \text DAT} \ \text child\]

‘A/The woman will take the rice out of the sack for a/the child.’
c. *Indirect passive voice*

Aalis–an ng babae ng bigas ang sako
Ø–A~alis–an ng babae ng bigas ang sako
IRR–NPFV–remove–IPASS GEN woman GEN rice NOM sack

para sa bata
para sa bata
for DAT child

‘A/The woman will take some rice out of the sack for the child.’

While there are linguists who analyze (30a–c) as voices (e.g., Kroeger 1993, Katagiri 2005, Mel’čuk 2006), many follow the Philippinist tradition of avoiding the term “voice,” referring to them instead as “focuses” or “topics” (e.g., Schachter and Otanes 1972, Schachter 1996, Foley and Van Valin 1984, Carrie-Duncan 1985). This is often not merely a difference in terminology, but can affect the analysis as well. For instance, Carrie-Duncan (1985) analyzes the nominative argument as the topic, not the subject, and therefore considers the grammatical relations to remain unchanged in all three sentences (30a–c): in her analysis of these three sentences, babae would be the subject, bigas would be the direct object, and sako would be the indirect object.13

Just as the identification of the subject in Section 2 required a simple, unambiguous definition of subject that is easy to apply, a similar definition of voice is also required here. I will define voice as a phenomenon where a verb’s diathesis — the mapping between a verb’s semantic arguments and their syntactic relations — is modified, but where its propositional meaning — the event expressed by the verb — remains unchanged (Mel’čuk 2006). With this definition, the establishment of voice requires showing two things: that the diathesis of the verb in each voice is different, but that the propositional meaning of the verb in each voice is the same. Before

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13 This follows the analysis illustrated in examples (7a–c) in Carrie-Duncan (1985:4–5).
demonstrating that both are true for the verb alternations in Tagalog, I will first present the concepts of a diathesis and propositional meaning in more detail.

3.1 Diathesis

As mentioned above, a *diathesis* is a mapping between the semantic arguments of a lexical unit (specifically in this paper, a verb) and their syntactic relations. It is an integral part of the lexicographic definition of a verb, since it describes what semantic arguments are required by the verb, as well as how they must be expressed. The notion of diatheses is explained in detail in Mel’čuk (2004, 2006); their usage in this paper will be primarily based on Mel’čuk’s formulation, though there are a couple of differences, which will be highlighted.

As an example, here is the definition of a Tagalog verb root, *mag–alis* ‘take out’; its irrealis form, *mag–aalis*, appeared in (1a):

(31)  

\[ \text{mag–alis: ‘X takes out Y from source Z’} \]

This definition in (31), which Mel’cuk (2006:174) calls a *propositional form*, gives a description of the situation expressed by the verb root *mag–alis*, or its *propositional meaning* (Mel’čuk 2006:184). The verb *mag–alis* expresses a situation where a person removes something from somewhere. The propositional form makes references to the verb’s semantic arguments and the role they play in the propositional meaning, representing them with letters; thus, X is the person doing the removing, Y is the thing being removed, and Z is the place that Y is being removed from.

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14 In Tagalog, where verbs always take a non-zero voice marker, the root will be taken to be the active voice form of the verb.
Next, each voice of the verb has a different mapping between the verb’s semantic arguments and syntactic relations; this is represented by the voice’s diathesis. The diathesis of the active voice *mag–alis* is given below:

(32) \[ \text{*mag–alis* (active voice)} \]

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<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Direct Object</td>
<td>Indirect Object</td>
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The diathesis in (32) shows the semantic arguments of the verb in the top row, each represented by a letter variable from the propositional form above, and each with its language-specific grammatical relation in the cell directly below, in the bottom row. For the active voice *mag–alis*, X is expressed as a Tagalog subject, Y as a Tagalog direct object, and Z as a Tagalog indirect object. The variable name assigned to each semantic argument will be based on the argument’s grammatical relation in the verb’s basic diathesis, the active voice, which will be identified in the next section. For now, we can assume that *mag–alis* is the active voice. So, the subject argument of *mag–alis* is labeled X, the direct object labeled Y, and indirect object labeled Z. This way, verbs with similar syntax have similar diatheses, making them more comparable.

The term “semantic argument” is commonly used, and has been used throughout this paper. However, thus far we have yet to examine its definition, and in describing the diathesis, it is now necessary to do so. For the sake of simplicity, I will employ a definition that is somewhat narrower than the one given in Mel’čuk (2006), and include only the most typical instances. I will define semantic arguments as the essential participants in the verb’s propositional meaning, and which can be expressed as a syntactic dependent of the verb.\(^{15}\) There are three obligatory participants in *mag–alis*, and

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\(^{15}\) The semantic arguments defined here corresponds to a subset of the semantic actants defined in Mel’čuk (2004:33). In particular, Mel’čuk includes “optional participants” in his definition of semantic actants
all appear in the propositional form in (29): X the remover, Y the object removed, and Z the source. In (30a–c), these correspond to *babae* ‘woman,’ *bigas* ‘rice,’ and *sako* ‘sack’ respectively. All of them appear as a syntactic dependent of the verb *mag–alis*. The propositional meaning does not include a beneficiary who the action of removal is being performed for, however, and the propositional form makes no mention of such a participant. Thus, even though the beneficiary can be expressed as a syntactic dependent of *mag–alis* (as *bata* ‘child’ is in 30a–c), it is not one of its semantic arguments, and is therefore not included in the diathesis.

The syntactic relations in the diatheses in this paper are distinguished from each other by their relative degree of syntactic privilege, or the number of morphosyntactic properties they possess. The most privileged is the subject, followed by direct object, indirect object, and oblique object. As described for subjects in Section 2, all syntactic relations are first identified in the basic sentence of a language. Then, in all other non-basic constructions, the syntactic relation that shares the most properties with a relation in the basic sentence is identified with it. The syntactic relations in this paper are based on (though not identical in all details to) what Mel’čuk (1988, 2006) calls Surface-Syntactic Relations. In contrast, in his diatheses, Mel’čuk (2006) uses what he calls “Deep-Syntactic Relations,” which in general make fewer distinctions than Surface-Syntactic Relations, and include syntactic relations in non-verbal constructions as well as verbal ones. See Mel’čuk (1988:63–67) for more details on Deep-Syntactic Relations.
3.2 Modification of the Diathesis

Having defined the diathesis, we are now ready to show that Tagalog verbs have voice alternation. Voice alternation is found in most multi-valent verbs in Tagalog; however, to analyze it in adequate detail, I will focus on the diatheses of the various voices of one example, *magbayad* ‘pay.’ The following sentences illustrate its three voices:

(33) a. Active voice

Nagbayad ako kay Juan ng limang piso
Nag–Ø~bayad ako kay Juan ng lima=ng piso
ACT.R–PFV~pay 1SG.NOM DAT Juan GEN five=LNK peso
‘I paid Juan 5 pesos.’

b. Direct passive voice

Ibinayad ko kay Juan ang limang piso
I–Ø~b<in>ayad ko kay Juan ang lima=ng piso
DPASS–PFV~<R>pay 1SG.GEN DAT Juan NOM five=LNK peso
‘I paid Juan the 5 pesos.’

c. Indirect passive voice

Binayaran ko si Juan ng limang piso
Ø~B<in>ayad–an ko si Juan ng lima=ng piso
PFV~<R>pay–IPASS 1SG.GEN NOM Juan GEN five=LNK peso
‘I paid Juan 5 pesos.’

The voices are the same as those in (30a–c): the active voice (33a, *nagbayad*, perfective aspect of *magbayad* ‘pay’), the direct passive voice (33b, *ibinayad*, perfective aspect of *ibayad* ‘be paid to someone’), and the indirect passive voice (33c, *binayaran*, perfective aspect of *bayaran* ‘be paid something’). In each voice, the verb is accompanied by three arguments: *ako/ko* ‘1SG.NOM/GEN,’ the payer; *limang piso* ‘five pesos,’ the payment; and *Juan*, the person being paid. *Magbayad* ‘pay’ has a fourth semantic argument, the

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16 This theme may also be seen as an instrumental; in addition to being the subject of *ibayad*, it can also be the subject of *ipambayad*, which is the instrumental passive voice.
product or service being paid for, which does not appear in (33a–c). This argument is preceded by para sa, as this example sentence from English (1986:181) illustrates:

(34) Kaya niyang magbayad ng hanggang tatlimpung piso
      Kaya niya=ng mag–bayad ng hanggang tatlumpu=ng piso
      May 3SG.GEN=COMP ACT–pay GEN up.to thirty=REL peso

       para sa mga mangga.
       para sa mga mangga
       for DAT PL mango

‘He can give as much as thirty pesos for the mangoes.’

In (34), the item being paid for is mga mangga ‘mangoes,’ whose relation to the verb is marked by the preceding preposition para ‘for’ and the dative marker sa.

    First, we give the propositional meaning of the root of the verb. As with mag–alis ‘take out’ in (31), we will take the root to be the active voice form of the verb, magbayad ‘pay,’ which appeared in (33a):

(35) magbayad: ‘X pays Z amount of money Y for goods or services W’

This is followed by the diathesis of the active voice form, magbayad:

(36) magbayad (active voice)

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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>W</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Direct Object</td>
<td>Indirect Object</td>
<td>Oblique Object</td>
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As with mag–alis, each semantic argument mentioned in the propositional form for magbayad appears in the diathesis, and is mapped to a syntactic relation below it. In addition to subject and agentive complement, syntactic relations which were identified in Section 2, the diatheses for the different voices of magbayad will also have direct object for the syntactic relation of genitive argument, indirect object for the relation of its dative argument, and oblique object for the relation of its dative argument that follows the preposition para. These relations will be used without an analysis of their relative
syntactic privilege; for the purposes of demonstrating voice, it is only important that they are distinct syntactic relations, a fact that can be readily seen from the different ways in which they are indicated.

The diatheses for the three voices illustrated in (33a–c) are then given below in (37a–c) respectively, with (37a) repeated from (36):

(37)  

- **a. magbayad**: X pays Z amount of money Y for goods or services W.  
  
<table>
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<tr>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>W</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Direct Object</td>
<td>Indirect Object</td>
<td>Oblique Object</td>
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- **b. ibayad** (direct passive of magbayad)  
  
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<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>W</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agentive Complement</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Indirect Object</td>
<td>Oblique Object</td>
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- **c. bayaran** (indirect passive voice)  
  
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<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>W</th>
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<tr>
<td>Agentive Complement</td>
<td>Direct Object</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Oblique Object</td>
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</table>

Thus, the voices in (37a–c) each has a different diathesis, assigning the subject relation to the arguments X, Y, and Z respectively: the payer X in **magbayad**, the payment Y in **ibayad**, and the payee Z in **bayaran**. Each argument, when not the subject in a particular voice, consistently takes on another grammatical relation: agentive complement for X, direct object for Y, and indirect object for Z. **Magbayad** is the active voice because its diathesis is the basic diathesis of the verb; this will be explored in greater detail in the next section. As for **ibayad** and **bayaran**, the type of voice alternation they represent is fairly simple to identify. Passive voices are defined as modifications of the basic diathesis involving the subject (based on Mel’čuk 2006:187). Since both **ibayad** and **bayaran** assign the subject relation to different arguments compared to the active voice **magbayad**, this makes them both passive voices of **magbayad**.
The second and last part of the definition of voice requires that the propositional meaning of the verb remain unchanged in all the voices. That Tagalog voices fulfill this requirement has not, in fact, been a major point of contention in the literature. Previous analyses that identify these voices as “focuses” or “topics” (e.g., Schachter and Otanes 1972, Foley and Van Valin 1984, Carrie-Duncan 1985) do not imply that they signal any semantic changes to the verb. This is further supported by lexicographic resources, such as English (1986). In English (1986:180–181), both magbayad and bayaran have the definition “to pay”. The entry for ibayad has the definition ‘to use something specific in paying,’ which at first appears slightly different. However, this still describes the act of paying; the word “specific” most likely refers to the fact that for the verb ibayad, the payment, which is the nominative subject, receives a definite interpretation (Schachter 1976). Thus, English (1986) provides evidence that magbayad, ibayad, and bayaran share the same propositional meaning.

We have now seen that certain alternations of Tagalog verbs, which have previously been referred to as “focuses” or “topics,” are indeed voices. This clarity is only possible because of the definition of subject in the last section, which led to the establishment of the nominative argument as the subject. Since it is the nominative argument that changes from one voice to another, identifying it as the subject has led to the recognition of a voice system in this section. In the next section, we will determine which voice, if any, has a diathesis that is distinguished among others as basic, and can therefore be referred to as the active voice.

17 In fact, conventional analyses have tended to err in the other direction: modifications of the diathesis that do modify the verb’s argument structure have generally not been described as doing so. Verbs like (1d) (in Footnote 1), for example, are better analyzed as applicatives, not voices; see Ross and Teng (2005) for arguments in support of identifying applicatives in Philippine-type languages.
4 Active Voice

Tagalog voices have several characteristics — such as the high frequency of occurrence of the patient voice, and the overt marking of all voices — that have made many linguists reluctant to analyze the actor voice as the active voice, and the non-actor voices as passives. Instead, some have claimed that Tagalog has a symmetrical voice system, where no voice is more basic than any other (e.g., Foley and Van Valin 1984); others, meanwhile, argue that the patient voice is the active voice, with the actor voice being an antipassive (e.g., Cena 1979, Cooreman, Fox and Givón 1984, De Guzman 1988). In this section, I will show that, upon closer examination, the characteristics of Tagalog often cited in arguments against the view that the actor voice is the active voice do not stand up to scrutiny. Once we adopt a definition of active voice that is based on clear, categorical morphosyntactic properties, it will be clear that, despite superficial differences that may suggest otherwise, [what?].

4.1 Previous Objections to Identifying Actor Voice as Active

Of the arguments against the accusative analysis for Tagalog, many refer to the absence of the kind of characteristics that are typically associated with active and passive voices in other languages; however, none of them are reasons to discount the analysis of the actor voice as active voice. Below, I will examine some of these arguments against this analysis.
1. High frequency of non-actor voices

Siewierska (1984:82–86) cites three problems with recognizing non-actor voices in Tagalog as passive voices.\(^1\) The first of these concerns their high frequency: in most languages the active voice is the most frequent voice, and in Tagalog it is the patient voice that appears to be the most frequent. In support of this, Cooreman, Fox and Givón (1984) find that in one Tagalog corpus, 76% of verbs are in the patient voice, compared to 24% in the actor voice.

However, while this may be unusual, frequency does not necessarily reflect the morphosyntactic structure of a language. Instead, frequency can often be a reflection of extra-linguistic factors. In the case of Tagalog, the direct passive voice is often chosen to express events of high semantic transitivity (Katagiri 2005). Therefore, in genres where such events are frequent, the direct passive voice can become frequent, but this does not indicate that it is the basic voice. Factors such as semantic transitivity are unrelated to morphosyntax, and should have no bearing on whether or not a voice is active (see Beck 2002:22 for a more detailed argument on the problems of using frequency as an indicator of markedness).

2. High semantic transitivity of events in non-actor voices

Siewierska’s (1984:83) second point, which perhaps partly explains the high frequency of the patient voice, is that the patient voice tends to be used for the more highly semantically-transitive clauses, in the sense described by Hopper and Thompson (1980) (Katagiri 2005). Some of the characteristics of high semantic transitivity that are

\(^{1}\) Interestingly, Siewierska (2011) comes to a different conclusion than in Siewierska (1984), while citing the same characteristics in Tagalog. While Siewierska (1984) concluded that voices with non-actor subjects should still be considered passive, Siewierska (2011) does not consider them as such.
associated with use of the patient voice are high degrees of affectedness and referentiality of the patient, as well as realis mood and perfective aspect. In contrast, high semantic transitivity is not normally associated with more typical passives in other languages, such as the English passive (Siewierska 1984:83–84).

However, as with the objection about frequency, this should not affect whether or the patient voice can be a passive. Although the passive voice’s association with high semantic transitivity may be typologically unusual, this is a feature of its usage based on semantics, and should have no bearing on a morphosyntactic concept such as active voice.

3. Syntactic prominence of actor in non-actor voices

Siewierska’s (1984:83–84) final objection is that the agentive complement in Tagalog’s non-actor voices is syntactically more prominent than agentive complements in typical passives in other languages, where they tend to be more syntactically peripheral. While in the passive constructions of most languages the agentive complement is often omitted, and usually made syntactically oblique when present, in Tagalog it is not only typically present, but also displays at least one syntactic property (say which one) normally associated with subjects in other languages (see Section 2 of this paper).

However, while the higher syntactic prominence of agentive complements in Tagalog may be somewhat unusual, this, like Siewierska’s (1984) other objections, is irrelevant to whether or not the patient voice can be a passive voice. As defined in the last section, a passive voice is a voice alternation that assigns a different subject from the active voice. The definition makes no mention of the syntactic prominence of the
demoted subject, and passive voices can have agentive complements with varying
degrees of syntactic prominence.

4. Overt affixation of all voices

Tagalog voices are also unusual in that every voice is expressed by overt voice
affixes. This prompts some linguists, such as Siewierska (2011), to claim that Tagalog
has no passive voice. Other linguists, such as Blake (1990), go even further and argue
that since one of the patient voice affixes, –in, has a zero allomorph in realis mood, it is
actually the patient voice that is the active voice. The following table shows all the
affixes used for indicating actor voices and non-actor voices in Tagalog, with their
different forms in infinitives, realis mood, and irrealis mood:19

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<tr>
<th>In Infinitives</th>
<th>In Realis Mood</th>
<th>In Irrealis Mood</th>
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<tr>
<td>Actor voice affixes</td>
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<td>-um</td>
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<td>Non-actor voice affixes</td>
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<td>pang–...–in</td>
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19 The voice affixes are divided into actor voice and non-actor voice affixes to avoid repetition, since many
non-actor voice affixes are used for multiple non-actor voices.
Table 2 shows the various forms of every voice affix used in Tagalog. No voice affix is zero in all circumstances; however, the suffix –in, which mainly expresses patient voice but also sometimes expresses directional voice, is realized as –Ø in realis mood. Blake (1990) uses this fact to argue that the patient voice is the active voice. However, the actor voice infix –um– is also realized as –Ø, though in irrealis mood. Blake (1990) dismisses this fact for two reasons: first, “the future” — Blake’s term for irrealis mood — “is not the unmarked tense-aspect”; second, in the “large class of stems” that take mag– in the actor voice, there is no zero allomorph, an observation that he implies overrides the importance of the zero allomorph of the –um– affix (Blake 1990:152).

Blake’s (1990) claim is based on specious arguments. The zero allomorph of the patient voice affix –in in realis mood is weak evidence: –in is not zero in all circumstances, and is only one of several affixes that can indicate patient voice. Blake’s (1990) reasons for dismissing the zero allomorph of the actor infix –um– also rest on shaky ground. He does not explain how irrealis mood is more marked than realis mood in Tagalog. It is not obvious that this is so, since, in Tagalog, irrealis mood does not appear to be any more marked than realis mood, either structurally or distributionally, and any claim that irrealis as a concept is cognitively more complex than realis mood (as described in Givón 1995:28) is difficult to demonstrate empirically (see Beck 2002:21–24 for a more detailed discussion on markedness).

Nor is it true that there are so few verbs that take –um– as their actor voice affix that the zero allomorph of –um– can be ignored. Schachter and Otanes (1972:292) observe that “there are many verb bases that occur with mag– or mang–, as well as with –um–.” There is even evidence that suggests the opposite: in Ramos and Bautista (1986),
which lists voice and applicative forms for a sample of 304 common verbs,\textsuperscript{20} there are 132 verbs that take \textit{–um–} as the actor voice affix, which is actually more than the 111 verbs that take \textit{mag–}.\textsuperscript{21}

Siewierska (2011) takes a weaker position than Blake (1990): she only argues against identifying the patient voice as a passive voice, because it is not morphologically-marked compared to the actor voice. However, while active voices in many languages are zero-marked, zero-marking should not be a necessary feature of an active voice. It is true that the active voice can often be identified by morphological zero-marking; zero-marking implies that a voice’s diathesis has not undergone any modification, while overt marking implies that it has. This is unfortunately not applicable in Tagalog, where all voices carry an overt voice affix. However, zero-marking is only one characteristic that can reveal a voice to be basic in some way. There are other characteristics that can reveal this, and we will see later that this is true for the Tagalog actor voice.

5. Patient voice forms with optional elision of voice affix

Cena (1979) (as cited in Foley and Van Valin 1984:137),\textsuperscript{22} in support of his argument that the patient voice is the active voice, points to verbs whose patient voice can be expressed without any voice (or aspectual) affix. The patient voice forms of some Tagalog verbs, such as \textit{kumuha} ‘get,’ \textit{magdala} ‘carry,’ and \textit{humawak} ‘hold,’ can optionally occur without any voice or aspectual affix. The following examples illustrate this for the verb \textit{humawak}:

\textsuperscript{20}Some of these verbs are homophonous.
\textsuperscript{21}Some of these verbs can take either \textit{–um–} or \textit{mag–}.
\textsuperscript{22}Hereafter, references to Cena (1979) as cited in Foley and Van Valin (1984) will be cited simply as Cena (1979).
In (38a), the patient voice of *humawak* in realis mood and imperfective aspect, *hinahawakan*, can alternatively occur as *hawak*, which occurs without either the realis infix *–in–*, or, more importantly, the voice affix *–an*. The corresponding actor voice, *humahawak*, on the other hand, cannot occur in this unaffixed form, as (38b) shows; it must appear with its voice and aspectual morphology, as in (38cf.). However, this alternation is not only found in the patient voice; some actor voice verbs can also occur without any voice or aspectual affix, often in imperative or hortative mood (Katagiri 2005:19):

(39)  Hampas na kayo, mga bata, sa mga langgam.
     Hampas na kayo mga bata sa mga langgam
     whip now 2PL PL child DAT PL ant
     ‘Whip at the ants, boys.’
     (Bloomfield 1917:221, in Himmelmann 1999, in Katagiri 2005:19)
In (39), the unaffixed verb *hampas* ‘whip’ occurs as an imperative in the actor voice; *hampas* is an alternate imperative to *humampas*, which does contain a voice marker, the actor voice marker –*um*–. In (40), the unaffixed verb *uwi* ‘return home’ is used as an alternative to *umuwi*, which contains the actor voice affix –*um*–, in the first sentence. Given that some actor voice forms can also occur without voice affixation, the occurrence of this pattern in some patient voice forms does not show that the patient voice is any more basic than the actor voice.

6. **Verbs with no actor voice**

Cena (1979) points to more evidence that the patient voice is the unmarked voice: the absence of an actor voice in some verbs, and the various restrictions on the usage of the actor voice in other verbs. Verbs with no actor voice include *bagalan* ‘make slow,’ *ikasal* ‘get married to,’ and *hintayin* ‘wait for someone to do something’ (these examples are from Schachter and Otanes 1972:306–307); “symmetrical predicates,” such as *kamukha* ‘resemble,’ *kasingtaas* ‘be as tall as,’ and *kasama* ‘be with,’ whose meanings do not change when their arguments swap syntactic relations; as well as “pseudo-verbs,” such as *gusto* ‘want, like to,’ *dapat* ‘must,’ and *ayaw* ‘not want,’ which are modal-like predicates that do not take aspectual affixes.

However, symmetrical predicates and pseudo-verbs not only do not have an actor voice, but actually have no voice alternation at all. Neither do verbs such as *bagalan*, *ikasal*, and *hintayin*. In fact, it appears that most, if not all, of Tagalog verbs that lack an actor voice also lack any other voice alternation: of the 304 common verbs in Ramos and Bautista (1986), 21 of them lack an active voice, and all of them occur in only one voice.
Without any voice alternation, these verbs lie outside of the voice system, and are irrelevant to the identification of an active voice.

7. Restricted environments of some actor voice forms

Finally, Cena (1979) notes that other verbs have actor voices, but only in restricted contexts, such as in headless relative clauses; these actor voice forms include *tumakot* ‘frighten,’ *gumulat* ‘surprise,’ and *gumutom* ‘starve.’ The following pair of sentences, taken from (Schachter and Otanes 1972:299), illustrate this for *gumulat*:

(41) a. *Gumulat siya ng mga kaibigan niya*
    0~G<uml>ulat siya ng mga kaibigan niya
    PFV~<ACT.R>surprise 3SG.NOM GEN PL friend 3SG.GEN
    *‘He surprised (some of) his friends.’*

    b. Siya ang *gumulat ng mga kaibigan niya*
    Siya ang 0~g<uml>ulat ng mga kaibigan niya
    3SG.NOM NOM PFV~<ACT.R>surprise GEN PL friend 3SG.GEN
    ‘He’s the one who surprised (some of) his friends.’

As (41a) shows, *gumulat* ‘surprise’ cannot occur as a matrix clause verb; it can only occur in a headless relative clause, as in (41b). Thus, the actor voice of some verbs occurs in environments that are more marked than others, implying that the actor voice cannot be the active voice.

While this does show that the actor voice has a more marked distribution for some verbs, this restriction is not pervasive enough in Tagalog to affect the characterization of the entire actor voice: in the sample of 304 verbs in Ramon and Bautista (1986), only 23 verbs, or 7.6% of the sample, have actor voice forms that are restricted to relative clauses.\(^\text{23}\) Given this proportion, verbs with restricted actor voices

\(^{23}\) These include verbs that can form actor voices with other actor voice affixes. These other forms may not undergo the same restrictions, e.g. *sumunog* ‘burn’ is restricted, but *magsunog* ‘burn’ is not.
should be analyzed as exceptions, and should not prevent the entire actor voice from being the active voice.

As with the discussion on Tagalog subjects in Section 2, the problem with identifying the active voice in Tagalog lies in the lack of a consistent, reliable way of doing so. What is required is a definition of active voice that is simple and unambiguous. Mel’čuk (2006:187) offers a good starting point: he defines the active voice as the voice with the *basic diathesis*, which he in turn defines as the diathesis that corresponds to the verb’s “basic form” (i.e. zero-marked) (Mel’čuk 2006:181). Unfortunately, in Tagalog, where all voices carry overt affixes, it is impossible to consider any one voice form as the basic form of the verb on purely morphological grounds. In such cases, the basic diathesis cannot be identified by a zero-marked voice form, but must instead be understood more generally, as the default diathesis of the verb.

Such a default diathesis does in fact exist in Tagalog, and it is that of the actor voice. The diathesis of the actor voice distinguishes itself as the default by being the only diathesis available in two verbal constructions, the gerund and the recent-perfective. This evidence will be examined below in detail.

4.2 **Gerunds**

Tagalog gerunds have no voice alternation, and therefore only one possible diathesis. In this diathesis, all arguments except the actor are coded in exactly the same way as they are in the actor voice. The actor, however, is coded differently: while in the actor voice it is in the nominative case, in the gerund it is either in the genitive case or the

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24 Mel’čuk (2006:181) actually defines *basic diathesis* for any “lexical unit,” of which verbs are but one type. Here, we will deal solely with verbs.
dative case, as a possessor. The following sentence illustrates the coding of gerund arguments, using the gerund *pagtugtog* ‘playing,’ from the actor voice of the verb *tumugtog* ‘play’:

\[(42) \]

(a. Tumugtog siya sa piyano ng isang

\(\text{Ø-}^{\text{T</um>ugtog}}\) siya sa piyano ng isa=ng

PFV-<ACT.R>play 3SG.NOM DAT piano GEN one=LNK

napakagandang tugtugin

napaka–ganda=ng tugtugin

INT–beautiful=REL piece

‘She rendered a beautiful (musical) piece on the piano.’

(English 1984:1468)

b. Masyadong mabilis ang pagtugtog niya ng piyesa.

Masyado=ng ma–bilis ang pag–tugtog niya ng piyesa

too=LNK ADJ–fast NOM GER–play 3SG.GEN GEN piece

‘His playing of the piece is too fast.’ or

‘The way that he plays the piece is too fast.’

(Schachter and Otanes 1972:163)

In the actor voice example (42a), the patient *tugtugin* ‘piece,’ being in the genitive, is coded in the same way as the patient in the gerund, *piyesa* ‘piece,’ in (b). However, the actor in (a), *siya* ‘3SG.NOM,’ appears in the genitive case in the gerund, as *niya* ‘3SG.GEN,’ in (b). The genitive case on the actor *niya* in (42b), however, hides the fact that it is actually a possessor of the gerund. We know this because the actor can also be coded in an alternate way, as possessors of nouns can (Schachter 1972:163). As seen in (43), there are two ways for indicating the possession of nouns:

\[(43) \]

(a. lapis ko

lapis ko

pencil 1SG.GEN

b. aking lapis

akin=ng lapis

1SG.DAT=LNK pencil

‘my pencil’

(Schachter 1972:136)
The first-person singular possessor of the noun *lapis* can either appear in the genitive case after the noun (*ko ‘1SG.GEN’, in 43a), or appear in the dative case in front of the noun (*akin ‘1SG.DAT’, in 43b), followed by the relativizing clitic =ng. Likewise, the actor of the gerund can be coded in the same two ways:

(44) a. pagsusugal niya
    pag–su~sugal niya
    GER–3SG.GEN
    GER~gamble

b. kaniyang pagsusugal
   kaniya=ng pag–su~sugal
   3SG.DAT=LNK GER–GER~gamble
   ‘his gambling’

(Schachter 1972:163)

Like the possessor of nouns in (43a–b), the actor can either appear in the genitive case after the gerund, as *niya* does in (44a), or appear in the dative case in front of the gerund with the linking clitic =ng, as *kaniya* does in (44b). The dative pattern is mostly used with personal pronouns (Schachter and Otanes 1972:163). Unlike the actor, the patient can only be coded in one way in the corresponding gerund, in the genitive case following the gerund, as it is in (42b).

The coding of subjects as the possessor of the corresponding gerund happens to be quite common in other languages (Beck p.c.). English provides a good example, as can be seen in the English translation of (42b), both as a main clause (45a) and as a gerund (45b):

(45) a. He plays the piece
b. His playing of the piece

The subject of the verb *plays* in (45a), *he*, becomes *his* in (45b), as the possessor of the gerund *playing*. Subjects are also realized as possessors of gerunds in languages such as Lushootseed, Uzbek, and Inuktitut (Beck 2000). Since in Tagalog it is the actor voice
whose subject is realized as the possessor of the gerund, this strongly suggests that the diathesis of the gerund is that of the actor voice. In contrast, there exists no typological support for a correspondence between the possessor of the gerund and the agentive complement, which would be expected if the gerund had the diathesis of the patient voice.

4.3 Recent-perfective

The recent-perfective construction lends additional support to the claim that the actor voice diathesis is basic, in a fashion reminiscent of the evidence from the gerund. Like the gerund, the recent-perfective has only one diathesis, in which all arguments are coded as they are in the corresponding actor voice, except for the actor: the actor of the recent-perfective appears in the genitive case, instead of the nominative case that it would take in the actor voice. This can be seen with the following pair of sentences, one with the actor voice verb *kumain* ‘eat,’ and one with its recent-perfective form, *kakakain* ‘have just eaten’:

(46) a. Kumain ako ng karne
    Ø-K<um>ain ako ng karne
    PFV~<ACT.R>eat 1SG.NOM GEN meat
    ‘I have just eaten some/the meat.’

    b. Kakakain ko pa l(am)ang ng karne
    Ka–ka~kain ko pa l(am)ang ng karne
    RPFV~RPFV~eat 1SG.GEN still just GEN meat
    ‘I have just eaten some/the meat.’

    (Schachter and Otanes 1972:374)

In both sentences, the patient, *karne* ‘meat,’ is in the genitive case. However, whereas in the actor voice clause in (46a), the actor subject *ako* ‘1SG.NOM’ is in the nominative case, the same argument appears in the genitive case in the corresponding recent-perfective, as *ko* ‘1SG.GEN’ in (46b).
First, we will examine the difference in the coding of the actor. As shown in (46a–b), the actor appears in genitive case in recent-perfectives, while appearing in nominative case in actor voices. On the surface, the actor’s genitive case may cast doubt on its identity as the subject. However, evidence from other constructions with genitive arguments suggests that genitive arguments can be the subject in Tagalog. One such construction is the intensified adjectival predicate, formed with the prefix *napaka–*:

\[(47)\]

a. Napakaganda ng baro  
   Napaka–ganda ng baro  
   INT–beautiful GEN dress  
   ‘The dress is very beautiful.’

b. *Napakaganda ang baro  
   Napaka–ganda ang baro  
   INT–beautiful NOM dress  
   *‘The dress is very beautiful.’

(Schachter and Otanes 1972:232)

The adjectival predicate in (47a–b), napakaganda ‘very beautiful,’ takes one argument (baro ‘dress’), which must be in the genitive case (47a), and cannot be in the nominative (b). Despite this, it has at least three properties shared by nominative subjects: ay-topicalization, targeting in non-polar questions, and number agreement.\(^{25}\) The following sentence illustrates ay-topicalization of baro, from (47a):

\[(48)\]

Ang baro’y napakaganda  
Ang baro=ay napaka–ganda  
NOM dress=TOP INT–beautiful  
‘The dress is very beautiful.’

(Schachter and Otanes 1972:232)

In (48), the argument baro appears in front of the napakaganda, and is also topicalized with the clitic ay, which attaches to its right. This shows that the genitive argument of

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\(^{25}\) As mentioned in Section 2, verb number agreement belongs to subjects only in the active voice, for verbs with voice alternation.
napakaganda can undergo ay-topicalization, which appeared in Section 2 as one of the properties belonging to the nominative subject.

The genitive argument of napaka– adjectival predicates can also be the target of non-polar questions, as (49) shows:

(49) a. at ... napakahusay niya sa pelikula
    at napaka–husay niya sa pelikula
    and INT–skilled 3SG.GEN DAT film
    ‘... and she was very good in the film.’
    (“Maja at Matteo, nanganganib ang relasyon!” 2011)

    In (49a), which has the adjectival predicate napakahusay ‘very skilled,’ the argument representing the person who is very skilled appears in the genitive. This genitive argument becomes the target of a non-polar question in (b), expressed by the interrogative pronoun sino ‘who’. Like ay-topicalization, being the target of a non-polar question appeared in Section 2 as one of the properties belonging to the nominative subject.

    Finally, the genitive argument can trigger optional number agreement on the adjectival predicate. The relevant examples are reproduced here:

(50) a. Napakatalino ni Armand
    Napaka–talino ni Armand
    INT–bright GEN Armand
    ‘Armand is very bright.’

b. Napakatatalino ng mga batang Intsik
    Napaka–ta~talino ng mga bata=ng Intsik
    INT–PL~bright GEN PL bata=LNK China
    ‘The Chinese children are very bright.’

The adjectival predicate *napakatalino* ‘very bright’ assigns genitive case to the argument representing the person who is very bright, as (50a) shows. When this genitive argument is plural, *napakatalino* can optionally be pluralized by reduplication, as (50b) shows. As mentioned in Section 2, this optional number agreement is also a property of active voice subjects.

Having seen that the subject can be coded as a genitive argument, let us examine how in the recent-perfective the patient is coded in the same way as it is in the actor voice. The patient in recent-perfectives displays a type of Differential-Object Marking (DOM) that is also found in certain, though not all, actor voice clauses (see Latrouite 2011 for more on DOM in the actor voice). As (51a) shows, in the genitive case, the patient can be interpreted as either definite or indefinite. To ensure a definite reading, it may take the dative case instead, as in (51c), which differs from (a) only in the case-marking of *karne*:

(51) c. Kakakain ko pa l(am)ang sa karne
   Ka–ka~kain ko pa l(am)ang sa karne
   RPFV–RPFV~eat 1SG.GEN still just DAT meat
   ‘I have just eaten the meat.’

   (Schachter and Otanes 1972:375)

This type of DOM also appears in the actor voice, in certain headless relative clauses:

(52) a. Siya ang nakakita ng aksidente
   Siya ang naka–Ø–kita ng aksidente
   3SG.NOM NOM ACT.R–PFV~see GEN accident
   ‘He is the one who saw a/the accident.’

   b. Siya ang nakakita sa aksidente
   Siya ang naka–Ø–kita sa aksidente
   3SG.NOM NOM ACT.R–PFV~see DAT accident
   ‘He is the one who saw the accident.’

   (Latrouite 2011:94–95)
The definiteness of *aksidente* in the genitive case (52a) is ambiguous, while *aksidente* in the dative case (52b) can only be definite. For certain verbs, this pattern is also observed in the actor voice as part of main clauses:

(53)  Tumuklaw ang ahas ng/sa ibon
Ø–T<uml>uklaw ang ahas ng/sa ibon
PFV–<ACT.R>peck NOM snake GEN/DAT bird
‘The snake attacked a/the bird.’

(54)  Nagdadala siya ng/sa libro
Nag–da~dala siya ng/sa libro
ACT.R–NPFV~carry 3SG.NOM GEN/DAT book
‘He is carrying a/the book.’

(Latrouite 2011:97)

As in (52), the main clauses in (53) and (54) both contain verbs in the actor voice (*tumuklaw* ‘peck’ and *magdala* ‘carry’), and both have direct objects that display DOM: in the genitive case a direct object can be indefinite or definite, while in the dative case it can only be interpreted as definite.

This shared DOM pattern between the actor voice and the recent-perfective is not only positive evidence for identifying the diathesis of the recent-perfective as the diathesis of the actor voice, but is also negative evidence against identifying it as the diathesis of the patient voice. To identify it as the diathesis of the patient voice, there would need to be a correspondence between nominative subjects (which is what the patient would be in the patient voice) and arguments with this distinctive pattern of case alternation. There does not appear to be any strong support for such a correspondence, either from other constructions in Tagalog or from other languages.

Thus, the genitive argument of some constructions in Tagalog has several properties that characterize Tagalog subjects: *ay*-topicalization, targeting in non-polar questions, and number agreement. This suggests that genitive arguments can also be
subjects in Tagalog. More specifically, it suggests that the actor of the recent-perfective can be the subject, despite being in the genitive case. This, together with the fact that recent-perfectives share DOM of the patient with the actor voice in certain constructions, provides strong reasons to identify the diathesis of the recent-perfective as the actor voice diathesis.

4.4 Summary

Having seen that the only diathesis in both the gerund and the recent-perfective is the diathesis of the actor voice, we arrive at the conclusion that the actor voice diathesis is basic. Since the actor voice diathesis is the basic diathesis, the actor voice should be identified as the active voice. And as was shown in the last section, since all non-active voices reassign the subject relation to a different argument, they all fit the definition for passive voice. As with the identification of the Tagalog subject, the identification of the active voice is possible only after adopting a simple, unambiguous definition of active voice. Once that is achieved, we can see that the characteristics of the voice system in Tagalog that seem peculiar turn out to be inconsequential, and that its basic character is similar to many other voice systems whose analyses are the subjects of far less controversy.

5 Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to settle some long-standing controversies among linguists over the status of several cross-linguistic concepts in Tagalog: subject, voice, and active voice. In all these cases, the main cause of disagreement has been the lack of
simple, unambiguous definitions that can be used to identify these concepts. In Section 2, to identify the subject, I first defined it as the most syntactically-privileged syntactic relation. Using this definition, I examined 14 morphosyntactic properties to show that of the two arguments that have been identified as the subject in non-actor voices, it is the nominative argument that possesses more of these properties, not the actor, and hence the nominative argument should be recognized as the subject. Then, in Section 3, to identify voice alternations, I defined them as modifications of a verb’s diathesis that do not alter the verb’s propositional meaning. Tagalog has verb alternations, each of which assigned nominative case to a different syntactic argument. Since Section 2 showed that nominative arguments are subjects in Tagalog, these verb alternations reassign syntactic relations, and consequently should be characterized as voices. Finally, in Section 4, to identify the active voice, I defined it as the voice with the basic diathesis of a verb — the diathesis that distinguishes itself in some way as the default, unmarked diathesis. I examined previous arguments against identifying the actor voice as the active voice, and put forth criticisms of these arguments. I also showed how in two verbal constructions, the gerund and the recent-perfective, which only have one diathesis, their only diathesis is that of the actor voice. This distinguishes the actor voice diathesis from the diatheses of all other voices, making the actor voice the active voice.

Clarity on the nature of Tagalog’s syntactic alignment can reveal other syntactic phenomena whose characteristics have thus far remained obscure amidst uncertainty. One such phenomenon is applicatives. Applicatives in Tagalog have previously been identified as voice (or “focus/topic,” in conventional Philppinist terminology), but are in fact distinguished semantically from voices, in that they increase the number of a verb’s
semantic arguments by one. While applied arguments occur as syntactic objects in most other languages, Tagalog applicatives occur instead as syntactic subjects. This does not appear to be unique to Tagalog: a construction in Japanese, known as the “adversative passive,” is analyzed by Mel’čuk (2006:242, fn. 21) as an applicative whose applied argument is also the subject. These examples in Tagalog and Japanese motivate a survey of similar constructions, and call for a decision on whether it is more illuminating to characterize applicatives syntactically, as in Peterson (2006) and Beck (2009), or semantically, as Mel’čuk (2006).

In addition to the fact that the analysis given in this paper can reveal unusual characteristics in other Tagalog phenomena, it is more significant that this analysis illustrates the effectiveness of using simple, unambiguous definitions in linguistic analysis. I will therefore end this paper with an argument for the widespread adoption of such definitions in the future.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

As we have seen throughout this paper, the controversy over the analysis of the Tagalog subject and voice system has been primarily due to the continual failure to adopt and agree on simple, unambiguous definitions. Linguistic phenomena such as subjects, voice, and active voice can be challenging to define, because they often have many different characteristics that typically occur together. However, without an agreement on which characteristics of a phenomenon should be considered essential, linguists can argue endlessly over the existence of linguistic phenomena by appealing to different characteristics. This makes it almost impossible to reach a consensus on even the most
basic linguistic analysis, as we have seen in Tagalog and other Philippine languages. And without this consensus, cross-linguistic comparisons become confused, and linguistic typology as a field struggles to move forward.

The solution to this impasse is to develop definitions that are simple and unambiguous, for all linguistic phenomena. These definitions should be simple, because complex definitions not only allow room for mistakes in identifying the phenomenon, but also render the phenomenon difficult to conceptualize, and difficult to use as a building block for higher-level phenomena. Definitions should also be unambiguous, because ambiguous definitions leave room for disagreement on the identification of the phenomenon. By adopting simple and unambiguous definitions, we can ensure that our linguistic analyses are explicit about the theoretical assumptions supporting them, and help to eliminate the kind of disagreement that arises from mere misunderstanding.

This practice by no means eliminates diversity in theoretical perspectives. While the common cross-linguistic concepts of subject, voice, and active voice are useful in describing Tagalog and other Philippine languages, the definitions of them that I have adopted in this paper are by no means necessary in every analysis. Different theoretical perspectives may be based on entirely different concepts, and may offer useful perspectives that complement each other to provide a broader understanding of languages. The purpose of adopting simple and unambiguous definitions is simply to prevent any analysis from hiding poorly-reasoned arguments behind vaguely-formulated definitions, regardless of its theoretical disposition.

Nor does the use of simple and unambiguous definitions force diverse phenomena from different languages together under one overly-simplistic label. The definitions
prescribed in this paper focus on one similarity that is shared by similar phenomena in
different languages, but do not hide differences among these phenomena in other respects.
These differences can be reflected by other phenomena. A thorough linguistic analysis
must combine many different phenomena to provide a detailed picture of a language’s
morphosyntax.

Despite the complexity of many linguistic phenomena, it is still not only possible,
but necessary, to observe them using simple, unambiguous concepts. The complexity of
linguistic phenomena can be likened to the complex fractal shapes of islands and
continents, with coastal outlines that continue to reveal intricate detail even at smaller and
smaller scales. Even with shapes this complex, it is nevertheless possible to delineate
them fairly accurately on a map, using conceptual tools such as standard units of
measurement, stable directions, and lines of latitude and longitude. So too in linguistics
must we develop and use stable definitions to describe linguistic phenomena, so that they
can serve as yardsticks by which the great variation of the world’s languages can be
measured.

References


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Why is this subject so controversial? Most religions do not argue that species change over time. The overwhelming scientific evidence can't be ignored. However, the controversy stems from the idea that humans evolved from monkeys or primates and the origins of life on Earth. Most famously, this controversy came to a head in Tennessee in 1925 during the Scopes "Monkey" Trial when a substitute teacher was found guilty of teaching evolution. More recently, legislative bodies in several states are trying to reinstate the teaching of Intelligent Design and Creationism in science classes. This "war" between science and religion has been perpetuated by the media. In fact, science does not deal with religion at all and is not out to discredit any religion. How to use controversy in a sentence. Example sentences with the word controversy. controversy example sentences. controversy Sentence Examples. He had been placed in the center of a controversy he couldn't resolve. 1K. 449. The New Testament reflects a controversy. 632. 284. The controversy that ensued made a split in the nonjuring communion. controversy (over/about/surrounding somebody/something) public discussion and argument about something that many people strongly disagree about, think is bad, or are shocked by. to arouse/cause controversy. a bitter controversy over/about the site of the new airport. The controversy surrounding his latest movie continues. Controversy exists as to how safe these drugs are. Controversy is raging over the route of the new motorway. He has resigned amid continuing controversy over his expense claims. His views have excited a lively controversy among fellow scientists. Public funding could resolve the controversy surrounding campaign finance. The book raised a storm of controversy. The controversy centred on the issue of compensation for the victims.