

## TUCKING-IN AND PIVOT-THIRD WORD ORDER\*

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Some formal investigations of specifiers have suggested that, if a phrase has multiple specifiers and one of these specifiers is thematic (i.e., externally merged), this thematic specifier is necessarily the lowest one. This ‘thematic-lowest’ hypothesis has been used to explain extraction facts in Tagalog (Rackowski and Richards 2005). The present paper brings in new data to the discussion on specifiers, namely the ‘pivot-third’ word order found in many Austronesian languages. I suggest a new analysis for it, according to which pivots in pivot-third languages tuck in to Spec-VoiceP. They end up below the thematic specifier, rather than above it. If accepted, this analysis casts doubt on the generalization that thematic specifiers must be lowest among a maximal projection’s specifiers.

### 1. Introduction

Ever since the idea was first suggested by Chomsky (1995b), it has been widely accepted in minimalist syntax that nothing stops a phrase from having more than one specifier (Richards 1997; Mulders 1997; Chomsky 2004). Indeed, bare phrase structure (Chomsky 1995a) lacks the provisions of X-bar theory that limit specifiers to one per maximal projection. The possibility of a projection with multiple specifiers raises a number of questions regarding how they relate to one another; this paper considers the question of how they are ordered.

One particular claim that has been made about the ordering of specifiers is that a specifier that results from external merge is always situated below any specifiers resulting from internal merge (i.e. movement) (McGinnis 1998; Rackowski 2002; Rackowski and Richards 2005). Furthermore, for Rackowski and Richards (2005), the ‘always-lowest’ behaviour of externally-merged specifiers, together with a particular notion of locality, is what explains the extraction restriction in Tagalog. Rackowski and Richards (2005) argue that Tagalog pivots (the clause’s privileged argument, also known as ‘subjects’ or ‘topics’) move to Spec-VoiceP and land above the external argument (EA). The pivot is thus closer to higher probes than the EA, meaning that it, and nothing else, can escape VoiceP.

Against this backdrop, the present paper argues, based on data from Cebuano that are new to the literature on specifiers, that the situation among VoiceP’s specifiers is the reverse of what is described by Rackowski and Richards (2005). The thematic specifier is the highest, not the lowest. I will argue this by providing a new analysis of ‘pivot-third’ (P3) word order (Sells 1997, 2000; Travis 2010). This refers to the basic clausal word order in Cebuano, where the pivot comes third, after the verb and the EA. While Cebuano allows for scrambling, its unmarked clausal word order is represented in (1), where the pivot is in bold.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Glosses and abbreviations in this paper are as follows. Cases: ACC: ‘accusative’; GEN: ‘genitive’; NOM: ‘nomina-

- (1) I-sulat ni Linda **ang lapis** ug sulat.  
IV-write GEN Linda NOM pencil OBL letter  
'Linda will write a letter with the pencil.'

I will derive the P3 word order by having the pivot tuck in (move below) the EA, which stays in situ at Spec-VoiceP, making the pivot the third constituent after the verb and EA. While the examples will all come from Cebuano, the intent is for the claims to apply to languages displaying P3 word order generally. I will suggest that the Spec-VoiceP position of the pivot is a 'halfway' landing site: Spec-VoiceP is a phase edge (Chomsky 2001) through which the pivot must move on its way to a higher dedicated pivot position (e.g., Spec-CP). In contrast to Cebuano's pivots, pivots move overtly to that dedicated position in pivot-final languages like Tagalog.

This paper is organized as follows. In section 2, I provide theoretical background on tucking-in and thematic specifiers. Then, in section 3, I describe the new data that this paper brings to this discussion, namely P3 word order. Previous analyses of it are discussed in section 4, and finally in section 5, I turn to my proposal involving tucking-in to Spec-VoiceP, not above but below the EA. Section 6 concludes that thematic specifiers are not (necessarily) the lowest among a phrase's specifiers.

## 2. Background on specifiers

Under minimalist assumptions (Chomsky 1995a,b), there is nothing preventing a phrase from hosting multiple specifiers. This raises the question of how these specifiers relate to one another. In this section, I review two claims about such multiple-specifier configurations. The first claim is that specifiers 'tuck in' below one another; the second is that thematic (i.e., externally merged) specifiers are universally located below internally merged specifiers in the maximal projection hosting them.

### 2.1. Tucking-in

Consider the Bulgarian multiple-*wh* question in (2). Specifically, notice that even when it is fronted to Spec-CP, the subject *wh*-phrase linearly precedes the object, mimicking the linear order of these constituents before A' movement.

- (2) *Bulgarian* (Richards 1997, 54; McGinnis 1998, 114)
- a. Koj<sub>i</sub> kogo<sub>j</sub> vižda t<sub>i</sub> t<sub>j</sub>?  
who whom sees  
'Who sees whom?'
- b.\*Kogo<sub>j</sub> koj<sub>i</sub> vižda t<sub>i</sub> t<sub>j</sub>?  
whom who sees

Yet, if movement was always to the root (and assuming some notion of locality in movement), it is actually the reverse order (2b) that would be expected. The subject is most local to C so it would be probed and move first; the more distant object would only move afterwards, and if movement is always to the root, it would land above (to the left of) the subject.

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tive'; OBL: 'oblique'; CS: 'case marker.' Voices: AV: 'agent voice'; IV: 'instrument voice'; LV: 'locative voice'; PV: 'patient voice.' Other: ASP 'aspect'; LK: 'linker'; PL: 'plural'; SG: 'singular'; 1/2/3: first/second/third person.

Data like these lead Richards (1997) and Mulders (1997) to propose that in fact, movement is not always to the root. Rather, phrases move right next to the head of the phrase they move to. Thus, if a head H already has a specifier, a phrase moving to Spec-HP will be placed underneath the already-existing specifier, rather than above it: it *tucks in*, to use Richards' (1997) term. This is schematized in (3), where Spec<sub>n</sub> is the n<sup>th</sup> phrase to move. Specifiers do not 'extend the tree' as in (3a), but rather move immediately by the head, as in (3b).

- (3) a. \*<sub>[HP Spec<sub>2</sub> [Spec<sub>1</sub> [H ... ]]]</sub>  
 b. <sub>[HP Spec<sub>1</sub> [Spec<sub>2</sub> [H ... ]]]</sub>

Richards (1997) justifies this conceptually on the basis of locality, specifically a 'shortest move' principle: (3b) involves shorter movement for Spec<sub>2</sub> than (3a). Meanwhile, Mulders (1997) justifies this based on the way labels project following movement and agreement (in a nutshell, the label that projects following movement/agreement is not conducive to further movement/agreement, so that any further movement/agreement must occur below that label). Either way, let us assume that (3b) is at least a possibility for language.

But notice that (2) is an example involving two 'similar' specifiers: both phrases are in Spec-CP due to movement, and movement involving the same feature at that. What about cases where a head hosts multiple specifiers that are not similar to each other in this way? On this point, there is an empirical generalization that the literature has converged on.

## 2.2. Thematic specifiers

A case of 'non-similar' specifiers occurs when one of the specifiers is externally merged rather than internally merged; one of the specifiers is in its thematic position. Both Rackowski (2002) and McGinnis (1998) argue, based on different types of data, that thematic specifiers are always lowest among a maximal projection's specifiers. In this section, I first discuss this empirical generalization (call it the 'thematic-lowest' hypothesis), and then discuss how Rackowski (2002) and McGinnis (1998) suggest deriving it.

### 2.2.1. Empirical evidence for the thematic-lowest hypothesis

The evidence for the thematic-lowest hypothesis comes from word order facts for McGinnis (1998), and from the behaviour of Austronesian pivots for Rackowski (2002). Let us start with McGinnis' argument. The word order evidence she provides for the thematic-lowest hypothesis comes from Icelandic: when an object shifts, it can surface to the left of the EA (but see also McGinnis 1998, 68, fn. 3).

- (4) <sub>[CP Það<sub>i</sub> lásu <sub>[TP t<sub>i</sub> <sub>[vP [þessar bækur]<sub>j</sub> aldrei neinir stúdentar <sub>[VP t<sub>j</sub> í fyrra]]]]]</sub>.  
 there read                      these books never any students                      last year  
 'No students ever read these books last year.' (McGinnis 1998, 36)</sub></sub></sub>

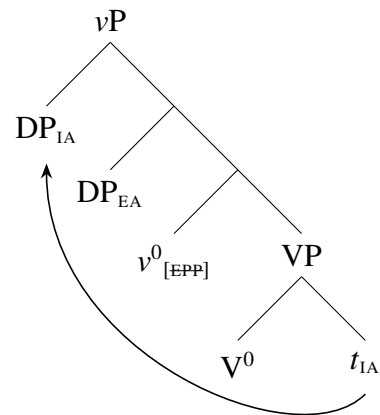
On the assumption that object shift involves movement to Spec-vP, (4) shows that the specifier of the shifted internal argument (IA) is above the EA, supporting the thematic-lowest hypothesis. But in contrast to this assumption, Chomsky (2001) views object shift as involving further movement leftwards of the object from the phase edge, through which the IA merely passes. If Chomsky is

correct, then (4) does not show us the object's position at Spec-*v*P, but at some subsequent landing site: it does not provide evidence of what the IA's position is vis-à-vis the EA at Spec-*v*P. While there is surely much more to say about (4), I will simply follow Chomsky's suggestion here.

The evidence for the thematic-lowest hypothesis provided by Rackowski (2002), in contrast, is not based on word order. Rackowski (2002, ch. 3) and Rackowski and Richards (2005) argue for an account of extraction facts in Tagalog based on the thematic-lowest hypothesis. They observe that pivots in Tagalog must be specific, and so argue that pivothood in Tagalog is akin to object shift in Germanic. The pivot 'object'-shifts to the phase edge, in line with Chomsky's (2001) analysis of object shift, explaining its necessarily specific interpretation (or at least collapsing it with the Germanic facts). The object-shifting pivot undergoes case agreement with *v*, as a result of which the pivot is given the morpheme *ang* (a morpheme which is glossed as nominative in my examples) and the verb is given the corresponding voice morphology.

The result is a construction where both the EA and the pivot are in Spec-*v*P. The PV example (5) is represented as in (6), both from Rackowski and Richards (2005, 569). The glossing in (5) is Rackowski and Richards', representing the hypothesis that voice morphology is case-agreement (so 'PV' morphology indexes agreement with accusative case, etc.).

- (5) Lu-lutu-**in** ng lalaki **ang adobo**. (6)  
 ASP-cook-ACC CS man ANG adobo  
 'The man will cook the adobo.'



What is crucial in (6) is that the pivot shifts above the EA, not below. Rackowski and Richards rely on this configuration to explain the well-known extraction restriction found in Tagalog and many related languages, which (at first approximation) states that only the pivot can be extracted. This is shown in (7) (from Hsieh 2018) for AV and PV relative clauses.

- (7) a. lalaki=ng [**kumain** ng mangga sa kusina]  
 man=LK **ate.AV** GEN mango OBL kitchen  
 'man who ate mango in the kitchen'  
 b.\*mangga=ng [**kumain** ang lalaki sa kusina]  
 mango=LK **ate.AV** NOM man OBL kitchen  
 'mango that the man ate in the kitchen'  
 c. mangga=ng [**kimain** ng lalaki sa kusina]  
 mango=LK **ate.PV** GEN man OBL kitchen  
 'mango that the man ate in the kitchen'

Rackowski and Richards (2005) assume that multiple specifiers in a single maximal projection are not equidistant; and since the pivot in (6) has moved above the EA, the pivot is closer to higher probes than the EA. Therefore, locality dictates that the pivot is the only possible goal.

### 2.2.2. Explanations for the thematic-lowest hypothesis

While they agree on the empirical generalization of the thematic-lowest hypothesis, the explanations for it that McGinnis (1998) and Rackowski (2002) provide are the mirror image of one another. For McGinnis (1998), the thematic-lowest generalization arises because tucking-in is not universal. Rather, it only takes place with specifiers that are similar in some sense—namely, with specifiers that move to check the same feature. It follows from this that no tucking-in will take place between thematic and non-thematic specifiers, the former being externally merged and the latter internally merged. Thus, the thematic-lowest generalization is captured by assuming that, when object shift occurs, the EA is externally merged to Spec-*v*P first and the IA object-shifts to Spec-*v*P afterwards, with no tucking-in taking place.

Rackowski (2002) derives the thematic-lowest order in the opposite way. Rather than saying that tucking-in is non-universal and thematic specifiers are externally merged before other specifiers merge internally, Rackowski follows Richards (1997) in taking tucking-in to apply across-the-board. She then follows Chomsky (2001) in taking there to be an ‘Immediate Agree’ principle; this principle states that “Agree always occurs as soon as possible,” which Rackowski interprets as meaning that movement takes place before external merge.

Of course, these are ultimately post-hoc explanations of the hypothesized thematic-lowest generalization, rather than conceptual necessities. And as stated above, McGinnis’ and Rackowski’s explanations are the mirror image of one another, taking opposite stances on both the question of the ordering of operations (whether external merge precedes or follows internal merge) and the question of whether tucking-in is universal or something that only happens in certain circumstances. Had either one of these authors answered one of those two questions in the opposite way, what would have been derived is not a thematic-lowest structure, but a thematic-highest structure. This is summarised in Table 1, where ‘no tucking-in’ is to be understood in the sense of McGinnis 1998 (no tucking-in of internally-merged specifiers under externally-merged specifiers).

Table 1: Are thematic specifiers predicted to be highest or lowest?

	EM before IM	IM before EM
universal tucking-in	thematic-highest	thematic-lowest (Rackowski)
no tucking-in	thematic-lowest (McGinnis)	thematic-highest

The conclusion for now is simply that the thematic-lowest hypothesis is more of an empirical observation than a conceptual necessity.

### 3. New data from pivot-third languages

In light of the thematic-lowest hypothesis, we turn to a set of data new to the literature on specifiers. In section 5, I will give the data a new analysis which supports a thematic-highest, rather than thematic-lowest, generalization for specifiers. But before doing so, I describe the data in this section, and then move on to discussing previous analyses of it in section 4.

3.1. P3 word order

Pivot-third (P3) languages are a subset of Austronesian languages spoken in the Philippines, which display a basic clausal word order in which the pivot follows the verb and EA (Sells 1997, 2000; Travis 2010).<sup>2</sup> Of course, this is unless the EA itself is the pivot, in which case it comes second.

(8) V > (EA) > pivot > XP (Travis 2010, 41)

In (8), XP represents all other phrases (the internal argument, locatives, etc.). For example, aside from the pivot, phrases in the P3 language Kalagan are ordered as EA > IA > Instrument > Beneficiary > Locative > Time (Travis 2010, 41). P3 languages include Kalagan, Pangasinan, Dibabawon, Isnag, Balangao, Limos Kalinga, and of course Cebuano (see references in Sells 2000, 124 and Travis 2010, 41). (9) illustrates P3 through Cebuano sentences in four voices, with the EA underlined and the pivot bolded. In (9a), the EA is the pivot, and in (9b–d), the non-EA pivot is positioned immediately after the EA.

- (9) *P3 in Cebuano* (Bell 1976, 7–11)
- a. Mag-luto' ang **babaye** ug bugas sa lata.  
AV-cook NOM woman OBL rice OBL can  
'The woman will cook rice in the can.'
  - b. Luto'-on sa babaye **ang** **bugas** sa lata.  
cook-PV GEN woman NOM rice OBL can  
'The woman will cook rice in the can.'
  - c. Luto'-an sa babaye **ang** **lata** ug bugas.  
cook-LV GEN woman NOM can OBL rice.  
'The woman will cook rice in the can.'
  - d. I-sulat ni Linda **ang** **lapis** ug sulat.  
IV-write GEN Linda NOM pencil OBL letter  
'Linda will write a letter with the pencil.'

At least in the case of Cebuano, P3 word order is generally not rigid; it is a preference, the 'most natural' word order. Nonetheless, I assume that this preference shows us what the basic structure is; more generally, being discourse-configurational does not mean a language lacks an unmarked word order. I assume that non-P3 word orders are derived via scrambling (e.g., Mahajan 1990) and additional projections relating to information structure, like TopicP or FocusP (Rizzi 1997).

Moving beyond word order for a moment, it is important to note that P3 languages like Cebuano have an extraction restriction identical to Tagalog's: only pivots can be extracted. This is shown in (10) for EA extraction and (11) for direct object extraction, both from Bell (1976, 50) (see her pp. 50–51 for LV and IV examples). While my goal in this paper is to discuss word order, I will return to this point in section 5.2.

<sup>2</sup> The cited authors call this 'nominative-third' word order, but given that there is still no consensus on the case system of Philippine-type languages, I use the more neutral term 'pivot-third' instead. I still gloss the pivot marker *ang* as nominative case (see Hsieh 2020 for a recent defense of this for Tagalog), but nothing hinges on this.

- (10)a. Naka-kita' ko sa magdadaro nga nag-palit ug karabao.  
AV-see 1SG.NOM OBL farmer LK AV-buy OBL buffalo  
'I saw the farmer who had bought a buffalo.'
- b.\*Naka-kita' ko sa magdadaro nga gi-palit ang karabao.  
AV-see 1SG.NOM OBL farmer LK PV-buy NOM buffalo  
'I saw the farmer who had bought a buffalo.'
- (11)a. Naka-kita' ko ug karabao nga gi-palit sa magdadaro.  
AV-see 1SG.NOM OBL buffalo LK PV-buy GEN farmer  
'I saw a buffalo which the farmer had bought.'
- b.\*Naka-kita' ko ug karabao nga nag-palit ang magdadaro.  
AV-see 1SG.NOM OBL buffalo LK AV-buy NOM farmer  
'I saw a buffalo which the farmer had bought.'

### 3.2. Tagalog is not P3

Given Rackowski and Richards' (2005) discussion of Tagalog, and the fact that Tagalog is a close relative of Cebuano, the question of word order in Tagalog naturally arises at this point. In fact, Tagalog does not have P3 word order, so it should not be collapsed with Cebuano. Rather, Tagalog pivots are clause-final in the basic case (with some complications when the pivot is the EA). See for example the literature review by Garcia et al. (2018, 621), who write that Tagalog word order "preferences are driven by an agent-first but also by a [pivot]-last principle" among post-verbal constituents; this comment is virtually identical to the description given by Kroeger (1991, 109), among others.<sup>3</sup>

The agent-first and pivot-last preference cited above for Tagalog is encouraging from the perspective of taking seriously word order as a marker for underlying structure. The preference can be understood as meaning that, modulo scrambling, agents are leftmost due to occupying a left-branching specifier at Spec-VoiceP (making them the highest thematic element) and Tagalog pivots occupy a clause-final position either because they are in a right-branching specifier or because the rest of the clause moves to their left.<sup>4</sup> Either way, despite these principles being only 'preferences'

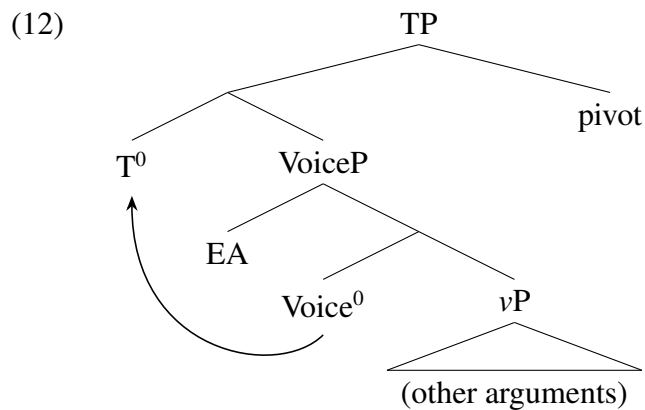
<sup>3</sup> This is an issue for Rackowski and Richards 2005 as written; the analysis of Tagalog predicts that the basic word order should be 'pivot-second' (P2), since the pivot moves above all other arguments to the highest specifier of *v*/VoiceP. On the matter of word order, Rackowski and Richards (2005, fn. 1) only write that Tagalog's actually observed word orders are derived via scrambling. But by definition, scrambling creates non-basic word orders, not basic ones, so it still holds that the basic word order that is predicted by their structure is P2.

A simple fix would be to claim that the pivot undergoes further movement to a right-branching Spec-TP (note that the definition of locality that Rackowski and Richards (2005) crucially rely on would prevent them from deriving clause-finality by having the predicate phrase move above a left-branching Spec-TP pivot, since this would make the pivot inaccessible to higher probes). On this theory, only the pivot can move to Spec-TP because it is the only accessible goal to T (being the highest specifier of *v*/VoiceP), and from Spec-TP it is still the case that only the pivot is accessible to higher probes.

Still, the thematic-lowest hypothesis does make one wonder why we find P3 and pivot-final Philippine-type languages, but no P2 ones; and the 'simple fix' just given controversially requires a right-branching specifier.

<sup>4</sup> For the view that clause-final pivots are the result of syntactic movement of the predicate phrase (rather than a right-branching specifier), see Pearson 2001 on Malagasy and Aldridge 2002, 2004 for Seediq (although Aldridge argues that this is actually a point where Seediq contrasts with Tagalog).

in Tagalog, they map straightforwardly onto a clause structure approximating (12), which I hasten to specify is only meant as a rough sketch of surface word order.

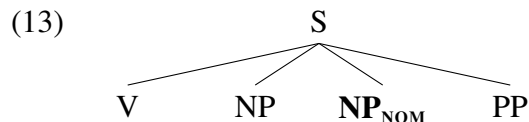


If this is accepted for Tagalog, there is no reason for Cebuano not to be treated the same way: P3 should be evidence for a basic clausal syntax, equivalent to what is sketched out in (12). Note that the difference in the linear ordering of pivots in Tagalog and Cebuano (last vs. third) means that word order in Cebuano is slightly more instructive if one is open to the possibility of right-branching specifiers: the relative height of clause-final subjects can be hard to pinpoint from word order alone, but in P3, the pivot is couched between the EA and subsequent arguments, giving a better defined picture of what needs to be generated.

#### 4. Previous analyses of P3

Clearly, the task of generating a surface P3 word order is trickier than the task of coming up with something like (12) for a pivot-final language. It is widely accepted that EAs are base-generated in Spec-*v*/VoiceP (see in particular Guilfoyle et al. 1992 for the first application of the predicate-internal subject hypothesis to Austronesian). The puzzling aspect of P3 is that the pivot is by all appearances *below* the EA. Crosslinguistically, the expectation is for subjects/topics to surface either in a high position like Spec-TP (e.g., English subjects) or Spec-CP (e.g., Germanic topics), or perhaps (according to some analyses of VSO) as an in-situ EA. But a derived subject/topic position below the EA is something virtually unheard of.

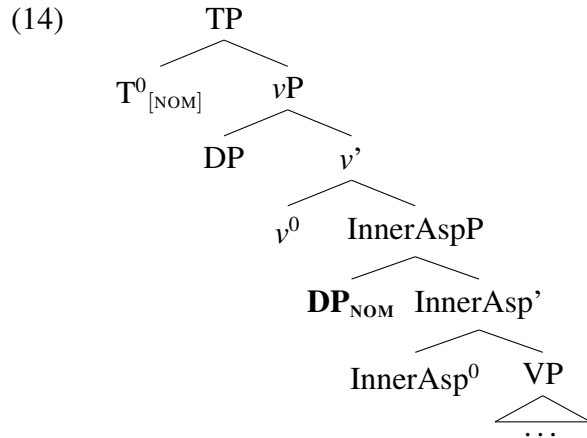
In fact, the first proposal for P3 solves this conundrum by claiming that these ideas about binary-branching hierarchical structure in language are simply wrong, or at least not universal. Indeed, Sells (1997, 2000) takes the P3 word order as evidence against binary branching at least in Austronesian; (13) is from Sells (2000, 123).



(13) is a slight simplification because Sells also has additional projections above S to deal with elements fronting to the left of the verb, but it accurately portrays how he obtains P3 in the basic case. But (13) is essentially a stipulation, not to mention that getting rid of binary branching is not an option if one believes in its universality.



The only other analysis of P3 that has been proposed is provided by Travis (2010, 91). She derives P3 from the pivot being the specifier of a head below *v*/Voice. Specifically, the pivot is in Travis’ Inner Aspect projection (I will call it InnerAspP to emphasize that it is within the extended verbal projection, in contrast to ‘external’ aspect). (14) is modified slightly from Travis (2010, 91).



In what follows, I will discuss Travis’ proposal in two ways: first in terms of the actual proposal as just laid out (according to which the pivot is in Spec-InnerAspP), and then in terms of the more general idea of placing the pivot in a projection (any projection) below *v*/VoiceP.

To motivate the proposal schematized in (14), Travis compares it to an alternative in which the pivot is in Spec-TP and the EA has moved to an even higher position (whatever that might be). She finds this alternative undesirable because such movement is “not supported by similar phenomena in other languages,” and “we cannot explain why it is always the external argument” that moves to that higher position (Travis 2010, 43). She therefore argues for the analysis in which the EA is in its locus of base-generation, with the pivot in an altogether lower projection. I agree that the EA should be in its base position, leaving no choice but to put the pivot somewhere within VoiceP.<sup>5</sup>

Still, I suggest a few issues with Travis’ analysis. First, her Spec-InnerAspP is in general meant to be a position for DPs that interact with inner aspect (telicity) in some way. This usually means having objects move into Spec-InnerAspP when the sentence is telic, which is meant to capture how telicity is encoded in a minimal pair like (15) (see Martin 2019 for recent discussion of this type of judgment).

- (15)a. Mary ate {for a minute, #in a minute}.
- b. Mary ate an apple {#for a minute, in a minute}.

In addition to being a derived object position, Travis (2010; see in particular p. 222) also uses Spec-InnerAspP as a place to base-generate arguments in constructions that interact with telicity in some

<sup>5</sup> The reader might notice an apparent discrepancy, viz. that Icelandic object shift in (4) was quickly dismissed as evidence for the thematic-lowest generalization on the grounds that Chomsky (2001) argues Germanic object shift involves the object moving further to left from the phase edge. But here I am agreeing with Travis (2010) that the EA in P3 should not be taken to undergo independent movement. I believe this is justified. Object shift is semantically marked as specific and in some languages can only occur with certain types of elements (pronouns), as discussed by Chomsky (2001); this type of markedness is not found with EAs in Cebuano or (as far as I know) other P3 languages.

sense. Specifically, she base-generates arguments in Spec-InnerAspP in Malagasy constructions such as the *tafa*-passive, which are marked constructions in Malagasy insofar as accomplishments in such constructions entail culmination, instead of only implying it. Thus, while there is some flexibility to Spec-InnerAspP, it still holds that Spec-InnerAspP is reserved for elements marking culmination/telicity. I suggest that this makes it an undesirable place to use as a language's canonical derived pivot position. After all, Cebuano pivots are not known to interact with telicity in a crosslinguistically unusual way.

This is a problem for the proposal as offered by Travis, but of course, this issue could be avoided by changing the nature of the projection the pivot is in. We can keep to the spirit of (14) while claiming that the projection hosting the pivot is something other than the semantically loaded InnerAspP. In light of this possibility, let us consider the idea of putting the pivot in a lower projection than the EA, abstracting away from what that projection would be; I will call this putative projection AgrSP, emphasizing that this is a *low* AgrS (it is *v*/Voice's complement).

In fact, several issues still come up. The first is that this AgrSP would have to be said to play no role when the pivot is the EA. Indeed, the EA is higher than the putative AgrSP. Presumably, AgrS in this scenario Agrees with the pivot (giving it the case marking *ang*); but the EA is higher than it, in Spec-VoiceP. Since EA pivots still bear *ang* marking, this would have to come from something other than AgrS. But, if AgrS does not Agree with pivots and does not need to host a pivot, what *does* it do? At this point, AgrS is really nothing more than an ad hoc way to obtain the P3 word order; the projection is essentially vacuous.<sup>6</sup>

The second issue is empirical. In Travis' analysis, non-EA pivots are asymmetrically c-commanded by the EA at every step of the derivation. They should therefore not be able to bind it. This prediction is not borne out (cf. Richards 2000, 114):<sup>7</sup>

- (16)a. Gi-tudlu-an sa ilaha<sub>i</sub>=ng amahan ang matag anak<sub>i</sub>.  
 PV-teach-PV GEN 3PL=LK father NOM every child  
 'His<sub>i</sub> father teaches every child<sub>i</sub>.'
- b. ?Nag-tudlu ang ilaha<sub>i</sub>=ng amahan sa matag anak<sub>i</sub>.  
 AV-teach NOM 3PL=LK father OBL every child  
 'His<sub>i</sub> father teaches every child<sub>i</sub>.'

As shown in (16a), non-EA pivots can in fact bind into the EA. While I do not have an explanation for why (16b) is not fully ungrammatical, the contrast between the two sentences stands. For Travis, there is no relevant structural difference between (16a) and (16b): in both cases, the EA, at all points in the derivation, asymmetrically c-commands the IA.

The last point I want to make about the low-AgrSP hypothesis is that there are some properties of pivots that are hard to capture under it. Specifically, pivots' specific interpretation and the

<sup>6</sup> Trying to solve this issue by claiming that AgrS and Voice are bundled into a single head when the EA is the pivot is similarly ad hoc: what would force them to be non-bundled when the pivot is not the EA?

<sup>7</sup> The judgement for (16b) is improved with a non-basic (non-P3) word order where the binder is moved to the left of the variable. But (16a) is the best of these sentences.

- (i) ?Nag-tudlo sa matag anak<sub>i</sub> ang ilaha<sub>i</sub>=ng amahan.  
 AV-see OBL every child NOM 3PL=LK father.  
 'His<sub>i</sub> father sees every child<sub>i</sub>.'

pivot-only extraction restriction do not fall out from this at all. One of the insights of Rackowski and Richards' (2005) analysis is that it collapses the specific interpretation of Austronesian pivots with the crosslinguistically robust phenomenon of object shift, which takes place when the object is specific. For Rackowski and Richards (2005), pivothood involves 'object'-shifting to the phase edge, thereupon becoming accessible to higher operations, explaining both pivots' specific interpretation and their syntactic behaviour. While the analysis I will propose in section 5 will allow us to keep Rackowski and Richards' (2005) insight that Austronesian pivothood is akin to object shift, I will not have a fully elaborated analysis of the extraction restriction (I will only suggest a path forward); but for the AgrSP hypothesis, if this putative AgrSP is the highest position that pivots move to, locality and phase theory would both lead to the expectation that if an extraction restriction exists, it would be the EA that would be able to extract, not the pivot.<sup>8</sup>

This concludes my discussion of Travis' (2010) proposal. Before moving on, let me conclude this section by briefly commenting on other alternative proposals. One suggestion I've received is to analyse P3 as having the EA surface higher than the pivot on account of it being licensed through adjacency to the verb. Indeed, much recent work, starting with Levin (2015), has claimed that nominals can be licensed not only through abstract Case, but also by adjacency to some head; the hypothetical claim for P3 would be that pivots are not (necessarily) as low as they seem, but rather, the EA has to surface high (next to the verb) in order to be licensed.

But in fact, there would be a number of issues with using adjacency to explain P3. As seen throughout the examples in this paper, Cebuano marks DPs with case markers, so we expect these DPs to be licensed independently by Case, rather than requiring adjacency (Levin 2015). Second, Cebuano allows for scrambling, even if it breaks adjacency between the verb and EA (cf. Erlewine 2018). Third, even when the arguments are in the canonical P3 word order, at least some elements can intervene between the verb and the EA, as with the floating quantifier in (17), which is associated with the pivot and not the EA.

- (17) Gi-basa tanan sa mga istudiante ang mga libro ni Rizal.  
PV-read all GEN PL student NOM PL book GEN Rizal  
'The students were reading all of Rizal's books.' (Bell 1976, 47; Guilfoyle et al. 1992, 388)

A second alternative proposal is in currently ongoing work on Pangasinan (another P3 language) by Lim and Erlewine (2020).<sup>9</sup> They follow Rackowski and Richards (2005) and Aldridge (2004) in taking the pivot to be the highest specifier of the VoiceP phase, arguing that the movement to Spec-VoiceP is covert movement (after all, it is meant to explain extraction, not word order). Given that EAs are in Spec-VoiceP and the pivot only ends up in a higher specifier on VoiceP covertly, this derives a word order where the pivot is to the right of the EA. As they put it, this is desirable because "'V agent ... pivot ...' is at least a preferred and possibly base order across various Philippine languages" (Lim and Erlewine 2020, 30). But notice the ellipses between the EA and the pivot: this is not P3. Indeed, having the pivot move only covertly means that its base position should vary depending on its theta-role and its corresponding position in the argument structure (e.g., a goal pivot would be in a different place than a theme pivot), deriving 'pivot-in-situ' rather than 'pivot-third.'

<sup>8</sup> The path forward I will suggest in section 5 involves covert movement of the pivot to a dedicated pivot position properly above the EA (e.g., Spec-CP). If one tried to maintain the AgrSP account of pivots by also having covert movement beyond AgrSP, this would mean having *two* dedicated pivot positions (Spec-AgrSP and Spec-CP, or whatever the higher position is)—far from an elegant account of P3.

<sup>9</sup> I thank Michael Yoshitaka Erlewine for making me aware of this work.

## 5. A tucking-in analysis

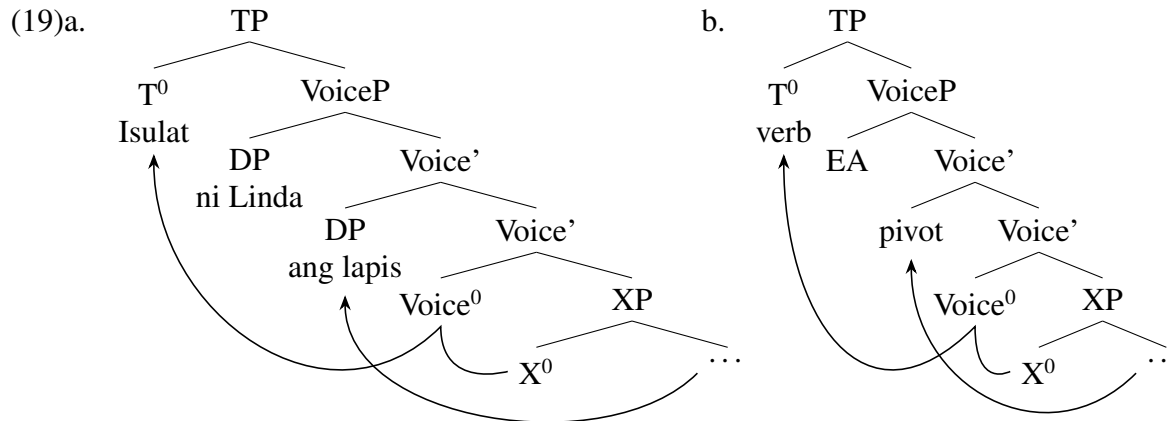
There is something paradoxical about the picture that emerges from the discussion so far. P3 word order involves a pivot to the right of an EA; Travis (2010) argues the EA is in its base position, which I assume is correct; but the pivot should not be in a projection below the EA's. We've just seen (based principally on cases where the EA is the pivot and on pivots' ability to bind into the EA) that having the pivot in a phrase c-commanded by Voice is ad hoc at best and empirically problematic at worst.

In this section, I argue that pivots in P3 are actually at Spec-VoiceP. I first show a simple version of my proposal that is meant to obtain the P3 word order (section 5.1), then enrich it slightly to deal with Austronesian extraction facts (section 5.2), and finally bring the discussion back to the question of thematic specifiers in multiple-specifier configurations (section 5.3).

### 5.1. Pivots tuck in to Spec-VoiceP

My proposal is that in fact, the pivot is not in a projection c-commanded by Voice, but, more in line with Rackowski and Richards' (2005) proposal for Tagalog, it is a specifier of Voice itself. The difference is that I suggest that the P3 word order arises from tucking-in of the pivot to Spec-VoiceP, hence landing just 'below' the EA. (19a) shows this for (18) (repeated from (9d)). More generally, P3 is schematized in (19b).

- (18) I-sulat ni Linda **ang lapis** ug sulat.  
 IV-write GEN Linda NOM pencil OBL letter  
 'Linda will write a letter with the pencil.'



This analysis allows the pivot to occur linearly immediately after the EA, deriving the P3 word order. Nothing unusual needs to be said for cases where the EA is the pivot (since the head that introduces the EA and that pivots move to is the same one). Pivots' specificity can be understood in the same terms as Germanic object shift, following Rackowski and Richards (2005), since pivots move to the phase edge. Finally, under the assumption that multiple specifiers of a single head are equidistant (Chomsky 2001), we now have a way of understanding the fact that pivots can bind into EAs despite being to their right: they are equidistant once the pivot moves to Spec-VoiceP.

On the other hand, in regards to extraction, Rackowski and Richards' (2005) explanation does not hold anymore, and clearly no explanation comes out for free from my analysis as stated

above. I now turn to enriching this proposal in a way that makes it compatible with other existing accounts of extraction.

### 5.2. Covert movement from Spec-VoiceP

To deal with the extraction restriction, I take inspiration from Lim and Erlewine's (2020) idea that P3 pivots move covertly. My claim is that while movement to Spec-VoiceP is in fact overt, there is also further covert movement of the pivot to a higher projection, from where only it can extract (see below for examples of what this projection could be). In spite of what (19) suggests, the canonical derived pivot position is not Spec-VoiceP, but a higher projection. VoiceP's status as a phase (Chomsky 2001) independently forces pivots to move through Spec-VoiceP on their way to that higher projection. P3 obtains because the copy of the pivot that is spelled out is the one at the intermediate Spec-VoiceP landing site. In other words, my claim is that P3 is an instance of is 'partial' movement (except for EA pivots, which do not move overtly at all, since they are already at Spec-VoiceP), akin to partial *wh*-movement in languages like German, where a *wh*-phrase can be spelled out at an intermediate Spec-CP landing site:

- (20) Was glaubt Hans **mit wem** Jakob jetzt spricht?  
WH thinks Hans with whom Jakob now talks  
'With whom does Hans think that Jakob is now talking?' (Cheng 2000, 78)

In fact, under this view, the pivot-final Tagalog clause can be viewed as minimally different from P3 word order: the difference is just that the Tagalog pivot moves on from Spec-VoiceP overtly rather than covertly.

If it is accepted that pivots in P3 languages move on covertly from Spec-VoiceP, several possibilities arise to deal with extraction facts. For example, we can follow Chen (2017), who argues that pivoting involves movement to Spec-CP (as Germanic-like topics), and that the A' probe of the higher C head in charge of extraction is flat, making it unable to see past pivots. Alternatively, by having pivots move to a projection just above VoiceP, the locality considerations well familiar in the Austronesianist tradition can kick in once again. One such projection is proposed by Hsieh (2020): he has pivots move to Spec-AgrP (a projection immediately above VoiceP) to check an A' feature (not a D feature: this is necessary for elements other than the EA to be able to move into it). Both these accounts of the extraction restriction are compatible with my analysis of P3 word order, as long as the movement past the VoiceP phase edge is covert rather than overt.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the tucking-in analysis of P3 pivots can be reconciled with either a feature-based (Chen 2017) or locality-based (Hsieh 2020) understanding of the extraction restriction.

### 5.3. Consequence: a thematic-highest arrangement at Spec-VoiceP

To conclude, let us bring this back to the question of the syntax of multiple specifiers in a single phrase. Recall that the thematic-lowest hypothesis claims that thematic specifiers are always lowest among a maximal projection's specifiers (McGinnis 1998; Rackowski 2002). Crucially, in

<sup>10</sup> For Hsieh (2020), extraction of DPs is mediated through a *pro* in the lower CP; it is not movement, but coindexation. Thus, the fact that I suggest that movement upward from Spec-VoiceP is covert, despite 'extracted' elements surfacing at the left of the CP, does not mean that covert movement feeds overt movement: it is Hsieh's *pro* that moves covertly upward from Spec-VoiceP, and the 'extracted' element is base-generated in its high surface position.

my analysis of P3, the pivot is below the EA, not above it. I conclude that it is not the case that thematic specifiers must be lowest. As foreshadowed in section 2 (see Table 1), this is not theoretically particularly shocking, since any combination of McGinnis' assumptions and Rackowski's assumptions actually predicts thematic-highest. For instance, if tucking-in is universal (as in Rackowski 2002, pace McGinnis 1998) and thematic specifiers are externally merged before anything is internally merged (as in McGinnis 1998, pace Rackowski 2002), then it is predicted that thematic specifiers are above rather than below other specifiers.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper, I proposed a new account of pivot-third word order, where the pivot is the third constituent in neutral sentences by virtue of moving to Spec-VoiceP, tucking-in below the EA. This account is very similar to Rackowski and Richards' (2005) discussion of Tagalog, which also has the pivot shift to Spec-VoiceP, but differs minimally in that the thematic specifier (the EA) is above the pivot rather than below it. This is clearly seen in the word order of P3 languages, but not in Tagalog, where the clause-final pivot does not show its position vis-à-vis the EA at the phase edge. That is, P3 word order, by virtue of overtly couching the pivot between the EA and the rest of the clause, offers a slightly clearer idea of the structure needing to be generated. If accepted, this analysis of P3 word order provides evidence that thematic (i.e., externally merged) specifiers are not lowest among multiple specifiers, in contrast to the thematic-lowest hypothesis of Rackowski (2002) and McGinnis (1998).

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