External Possession and the vP Phase Edge in Pangasinan

External Possession (EP) is a phenomenon where a possessor DP exists in a *semantic* relationship with its possessum, yet *syntactically* behaves like an argument of the verb (Landau, 1999; Payne & Barshi, 1999; Deal, 2013, 2017). One of the proposed approaches to this mismatch is **possessor raising**, involving a possessor moving from a lower position, where it is semantically related to the possessum, to a higher position, where it obtains a different case marking (Landau, 1999; Deal, 2013; Jeoung, 2018; Nie, 2019). In this talk, data from EP in Pangasinan (Austronesian: northern Philippines) will show that the position of external possessors must be <u>higher</u> than previously proposed for other languages in the literature. I will argue that in Pangasinan, external possessors appear at the **vP phase edge**, together with the pivot and external argument. The examination of EP in the language provides a means of better understanding the organisation of specifiers from different sources at the edge of vP.

Internal vs External Possession in Pangasinan: In the canonical clause type (1), possessors internal to their possessum's noun phrase are marked with genitive case. This internal possessor forms a constituent with the possessum and cannot be extracted.

(1) Internal Possession

Nap-plag [may aso [**la** pastor]].
AV-fall   NOM dog GEN pastor
'The pastor's dog fell.'

(2) External Possession

Nap-plag [may aso **=to**] [**may** pastor].
AV-fall NOM dog =3SG.GEN ART pastor
'The pastor's dog fell.'

In contrast, in external possession (2), the possessor is marked with *may*, an article typically reserved for pivot arguments in Philippine languages (3). Additionally, in external possession, an extra 3rd person genitive clitic coindexed with the possessor is present. The external possessor may be A-bar extracted out of the clause, separate from the possessum DP.

(3) Man-luluto **la/*may** sira su/may laki.
cook.AV **GEN/*ART** fish NOM/ART male
'The boy is cooking the fish.'

Raising vs Base Generation: There are two possible approaches to EP in Pangasinan. The first is the aforementioned raising approach, where the possessor raises from a lower position to a position where it is able to receive nominative case. When the possessor moves, the trace may be pronounced as a pronoun on the possessum. The alternative approach involves base generating the external possessor high. The base generated external copy is then coreferenced with the possessum DP-internal clitic pronoun (see Hole, 2005; Lee-Schoenfeld, 2006; Rodrigues, 2010).

The relationship between topicalised external possessors and their corresponding pronoun is island-sensitive, as seen in (4). This fact is compatible with two approaches: (a) a possessor raising approach, where the possessor raises from an adjunct to the matrix clause and (b) a base-generation approach where the external possessor obligatorily generates in a position where it can locally bind the possessum (i.e. in the same clause), then moves from there. The island-sensitivity data shows us that external possessors cannot be freely base-generated in any position that c-commands their possessum. My analysis below will stay agnostic between approach (a) and (b) above.

(4) *Si John$_i$ akalek-an =ko [ta sinaliw la agi =to$_i$ may libro].
NOM John laugh-CV.PFV =1SG.GEN because buy.PFV.PV GEN sister =3SG.GEN NOM book
'I laughed because John's sister bought the book.'

Landing Site for Possessor Raising: The current proposed landing site for possessor raising in the literature includes the specifier of μP in Deal (2013) for Nez Perce, a projection merged between vP and VP to assign case to arguments which are otherwise unable to obtain case. Nie (2019), on the other hand, proposes that possessors raise to the specifier of a raising applicative projection in Tagalog, a projection between vP and VoiceP (In her analysis, external arguments base generate in the specifier of VoiceP). Based on data from external arguments, specificity and A' extraction of possessors, I argue that the landing site for possessor raising should be much higher, at the lower phase edge, which I here label vP.

External Arguments: Both the current proposed landing sites for possessor raising are below the

generation site of the external argument. This captures the data in Nez Perce and Tagalog well, as only possessors from theme arguments are allowed to raise. In Pangasinan, however, external possession with agent possessums is possible too, as in (5):

(5) Pinakan   [la barkada =to]   [si John] may pusa.
     feed.PFV.PV GEN friend   =3SG.GEN NOM John NOM cat
     '**John's friend** fed the cat.'

This shows that the landing site for possessor raising should be higher than the external argument position, so that external possessors can bind into or move out of external arguments as well.
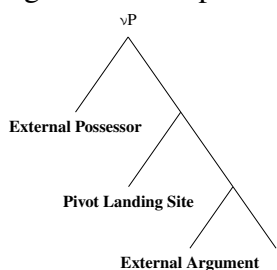
Specificity: There is a specificity distinction between internal and external possession. Internal possessors are obligatorily non-specific (6), while external possessors can be specific or non-specific (7).

(6) Internal Possession
     Nalmo   la   prinsipe [may sapatos la   bie].
     find.PV.PFV GEN prince   NOM shoe   GEN girl
     'The prince found **a/*the** girl's shoe.'

(7) External Possession
     Nalmo   la   prinsipe [may sapatos =to]   [may bie].
     find.PV.PFV GEN prince   NOM shoe   =3SG.GEN NOM girl
     'The prince found **a/the** girl's shoe.'

According to Rackowski & Richards (2005), only arguments at the edge of vP can be specific. Common noun arguments internal to vP have to be non-specific. Because external possessors have the option for specificity, these possessors must be somewhere at the edge of vP.

A' Extraction: Philippine languages like Pangasinan typically have an A' extraction restriction, where only the highest argument in vP can be A' extracted to Spec, CP (Aldridge, 2004; Erlewine et al., 2017; Rackowski & Richards, 2005). The argument eligible for extraction is usually the pivot, which is the argument that receives nominative case and moves to the edge of vP. However, in Pangasinan, external possessors can be A'-extracted as well (Evidence of movement comes from island data such as that in (4)).

(8) **Si Mary**, nantupak [may amiga =to]   la   aso.
     NOM Mary   hit.AV.PFV NOM friend =3SG.GEN GEN dog
     'Mary's friend hit a dog.' (lit. 'Mary, her friend hit a dog.')

The possibility for A' movement of possessors hints that the position of external possessors should be higher than the position pivots move to, since possessors can be extracted over pivot arguments.

Organisation of vP phase edge: A rough sketch of vP phase edge is shown on the left. This position for external possessors allows us to account for the external possession of external arguments, specificity properties of external possessors and the possibility of A' extraction. To obtain the correct word order, I follow Erlewine et al. (2020) in assuming that specifiers of vP get linearised to the right of the verb.

This proposal that possessors raise to the phase edge may resolve the mystery of external possessors being able to be marked with an article that traditionally only pivot arguments receive. The study of EP in Pangasinan is thus interesting on two levels. On one level, the similarities between external possessors and pivot arguments may allow us to more closely observe the relationship between the two. On another, the study of EP sheds light on the organisation of multiple specifiers at the lower vP edge that come from different sources.

Selected References: Alridge 2004 "Ergativity and word order in Austronesian language" • Deal 2013 "Possessor raising" • Deal 2017 "External possession and possessor raising • Erlewine, Levin & van Urk 2017 "Ergativity and austronesian-type voice systems" • Hole 2005 "Reconciling "possessor" datives and "beneficiary" datives" • Jeong 2018 "Possessors move through the edge, too" • Landau 1999 "Possessor raising and the structure of VP" • Lee-Schoenfeld 2006 "German possessor datives: raised and affected" • Nie 2019 "Raising applicatives and possessors in Tagalog" • Payne & Barshi 1999 "External possession" • Rackowski & Richards 2005 "Phase edge and extraction: A Tagalog case study" • Rodrigues 2010 "Possessor raising through thematic positions"