Malay and Cebuano Ditransitives:
A Minimalist Perspective

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Abstract

In the tradition of the generative school of thought in linguistics, the Universal Grammar (UG) is in the forefront in shifting linguistics from behavioral to cognitive science making linguistics an integral part of the study of cognition (Boeckx 2008:6-9). The study of linguistic theory focuses on the knowledge of language and the acquisition thereof. Hence, language theory becomes inseparable from the theory of language acquisition. With linguistic competence that a native speaker (NS) possesses, the tacit knowledge embedded in the cognitive system of the NS is necessary to be studied for the characterization and the discovery of the linguistic properties within the premises of UG. The study of the internalized linguistic system of NS bears obvious implications in the description and analysis of a particular linguistic system. By using the Minimalist Program, this paper deals with the linguistic analysis on the Cebuano and Malay languages in particular the computation towards Logical Form – the narrow syntax (Chomsky 2004:4). This paper attempts to analyze the predicate and the temporal layers of the clause structures of the said languages. The focused clause structures herein are those of the ditransitives. Ditransitives, often called triadic verbs, are a type of predicate with three arguments in its argument/thematic structure. Sentential constructions involving ditransitive or triadic verbs have two internal arguments and one external argument. The basic notion here is that ditransitives are a type of transitive verbs with two objects, traditionally known as direct object and indirect object, in the domain of the VP structure. In the study of ditransitives, there is a need to delve more into the syntactic and semantic properties of this particular predicate type concerning computation wherein the arguments and the theta roles are economically addressed. In particular, the syntactic phenomena are concerned with the case properties of arguments and the conditions associated with the assignment of case. Ditransitives, in Malay and Cebuano, project different cartographies owing to the fact that Cebuano is a predicate-

initial language while Malay is subject-initial typologically. The findings
of this study will contribute to the current studies on generative
linguistics, the Minimalist Program, typology, and Austronesian
linguistics.

Introduction

This paper deals with the attempt in the analysis and discussion on
ditransitives in Cebuano and Malay languages. This paper aims to contribute
to the study of Austronesian linguistics particularly in the fields of syntax,
morphosyntax, and typology Cebuano is one of the major languages in the
Philippines spoken by 30 million speakers concentrated in Visayas and
Mindanao. The Cebuano data is from the speakers of Davao Region, hence,
Cebuano-Davao variety The data is elicited by making use of the eliciting
materials developed by the Department of Linguistics, College of Social
Sciences, University of the Philippines. Other Cebuano informants are also
consulted for cross-checking and validation. On the other hand, the Malay
language, spoken by 21 million speakers in Malaysia, refers to Bahasa
Malaysia which is the national language of Malaysia. The Malay data is
from the speakers of KualaLumpur Federal Territory These native speakers
are the students who are taking up Filipino language courses at the
Department of Southeast Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,
University of Malaya. It is standard practice in generative linguistics in
relying on the grammatical judgment of native speakers on utterances (Adger
2003.2-6). The use of corpora is deemed secondary due to the limitation of
possible structural descriptions inherent to the use of a corpus.

The Minimalist Program: A Brief Sketch

This paper makes use of the Minimalist Program (MP) in the analysis the
data. Marantz (1995.352) considers MP as another version of the Principles
and Parameters Approach. The foremost publications which deal with MP
are the *A Minimalist Program for Linguistic Theory* (Chomsky, 1993)
and the *Minimalist Program* (Chomsky, 1995a). The Minimalist Program
assumes the architecture of the Principles and Parameters Theory [1] In MP,
language is considered as a mental object. As the most current version of
generative linguistics, MP deals with the questions on the nature of the

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[1] The caveat is that some basic ideas, concepts, and conditions in GB are either totally
eliminated or revised such as DS, SS, X-Bar Theory, Case Theory, and others. It is one of the
principal reasons why knowledge of GB is required and or presupposed before embarking on
the theoretical shores of MP

knowledge of language and the acquisition of language. Thus, the formulation of the Universal Grammar (UG) is included pervasively in the standard literature of generative linguistics. The Universal Grammar is a set of principles and parameters which constrains all human languages. These principles are uniform and constant across all languages. The parameters are the ones responsible for language variation. The most commonly cited principle is that of the *Structure Dependency Principle* which deals with the restriction of the movement of a constituent in a sentence. Movement in a sentence depends on the structure of the sentence in a particular language and not on the linear order of the sentence.

The theory of UG is concerned with the core grammar which entails principles, parameters, and the knowledge of the lexicon of the language. UG is conceptualized as part of the human genetic constitution that makes a child acquire language when he is exposed to the said language. In the layman's term, it means that the child is already hard-wired or predisposed to learn a language as part of his natural make-up. The next thing he needs after birth is the primary language data available to him in his environment. The representation below in Figure 1 shows the language acquisition process which every child of L1 acquirer goes through.
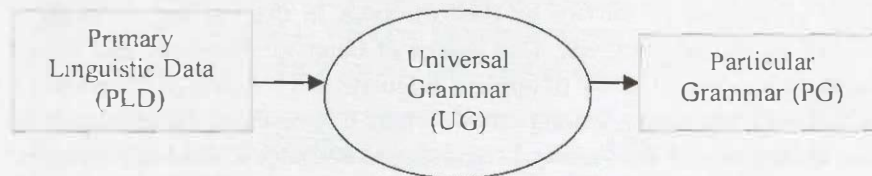
Figure 1. Language Acquisition Process

Chomsky sees UG "as the theory of the initial cognitive state" (Chomsky 2001 8). By virtue of the child's experience of being exposed to the first language, the child is deemed as being exposed to the primary linguistic data (PLD). His experience includes his observation on how people around him use language. Such experience serves as the input to the UG. Whatever the PLD is, this helps in determining the particular grammar (read. particular language) that the child will eventually acquire. The particular grammar is derived from the UG by fixing the given parameters in either of the two options similar to the fashion of "on" or "off" like a switch. The child's task is to come up with his first language with specific rules which he will eventually induce as the result of his exposure to the PLD in accordance to and within the confines of the invariant rules of the

Universal Grammar. Clearly speaking, his major linguistic task in the course of language acquisition is to fix the parametric options in the initial state which UG provides. Where language acquisition is deemed as a creative process, it makes the child capable of understanding and uttering novel sentences which are not even heard beforehand. Language in this sense can be defined as the product or output of the interaction of the PLD and the UG.

Adopting cognitive approach to the study of language, Chomsky uses the terms internalized language (I-language) and externalized language (E-language). The distinction of these two aspects of language is as follows. I-language is the mentalist representation of the knowledge of language that every native speaker possesses. This aspect of language occupies the very core of the syntactic investigation of Chomskyan linguistics. I-language can be deduced as the state of language faculty which is a mental component (Chomsky, 2001.48). Since this aspect of language is a mental property, Chomskyan linguistics becomes an allied field of psychology in this respect. It is at this point that Linguistics meets Psychology. E-language on the other hand is the aspect of language which can be observed and is influenced by external factors such as the environment, physiology, society, and other factors external to the human brain. This is the updated definition of the term traditionally known as performance in the earlier versions of transformational grammar This aspect of language becomes and always be the very core of study of applied linguistics. This type of linguistics is allied with Sociology, among others, where it focuses on the aspects of the use of language in the society Linguistics as a scientific field of inquiry has nothing to do with E-language which, in return, must be confined in the realm of social sciences. Assuming Strong Lexicalist Hypothesis[2], the analysis is made by use of Phase Theory[3] and Feature Checking[4]

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[2] Strong Lexicalist Hypothesis holds that all lexical items are either fully derived or inflected before entering into computation (Webelhuth 1995:26-27). This holds further that the morphological operations in the lexical component restrict the syntactic operations as reflected by the argument/thematic structure of the verb.

[3] Phase Theory is expounded in Chomsky (2001 2004. 2006) which holds that there are three core functional categories, namely, C, T and *v*. In this theory, computation is done by phase headed by C and *v* where CP is a clause and vP has the complete argument/thematic structure represented. After the phase is formed, phase undergoes transfer thereby making the head and domain of the phase impenetrable by virtue of Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC).

[4] Feature Checking holds that DPs may have its formal features checked in other syntactic positions. In the case of Case-features, theta-positions do not necessarily provide the locus of checking Case-features, thus instigating A-movement under Last Resort condition (Chomsky 1995 228-229).

Ditransitives in Cebuano and Malay

Ditransitives, often called triadic verbs, are a type of predicate with three arguments in its argument/thematic structure. Sentential constructions involving ditransitive or triadic verbs have two internal arguments and one external argument. The basic notion here is that ditransitives are a type of transitive verbs with two objects, traditionally known as direct object and indirect object, in the domain of the verb phrase (VP) structure. In the process, ditransitive constructions subsumed many names and got involved with various phenomena such as double object construction, dative shift, and applicatives, to name a few In general, such phenomena revolve around the need to delve more into the syntactic and semantic properties of the ditransitives concerning computation wherein the arguments and the theta roles are addressed accordingly In particular, these phenomena are concerned with the case properties of arguments and the conditions associated with the assignment/checking of case.

Ditransitive Verbs: Argument/Thematic Structures

In relation to the lexicon of Cebuano and Malay languages, this subsection deals with the morphosyntactic properties of the verbs of the aforementioned languages. The examples of ditransitives in Cebuano are tabulated in Table I below Following Table 1 are the sample sentences using the ditransitive verbs with the argument/thematic structure of each verb.

No	Cebuano	Gloss
1	maghatag	to give someone something
2	mag-ingon	to speak to someone something
3	mag-isplika	to explain to someone something
4	magpadala	to send someone something
5	magpahibalo	to inform someone of something
6	magpakita	to show someone something
7	magsulat	to write someone something
8	magsulti	to tell someone something
9	magtabang	to help someone on something
10	magtudlo	to teach someone something

Table 1 Examples of Cebuano Ditransitives

Table 1 presents ten samples of ditransitive verbs each of which is inflected with the actor-focus verbalizing prefix *mag*- signifying contemplative aspect of the verb. Cebuano verb is inflected primarily with three aspects, namely, contemplative with the prefix *mag-*, imperfective with the prefix *ga-*, and perfective with the prefix *nag-*. For sentential projection purposes, the selected verbs in Table 1 are given sample sentences below.

1   a. Gahatag   si Juan   ug bulak   kang Teresa.
         imp-Act-give Det Juan Det flower   to Teresa
             'Juan is giving flowers to Teresa.'
      b. gahatag: V· <source, theme, recipient>

2.   a. Nagpadala   si Juan   ug hinabang kang Teresa.
         Perf-Act-send   Det Juan Dct help   to   Tcresa
            'Juan sent a gift to Teresa.'
      b. nagpadala. V <source, theme, benefactive>

3   a. Magtudlo   si Juan   ug Cebuano kang Teresa.
         Cont-teach Det Juan Det Cebuano to   Teresa
            'Juan will teach Teresa Cebuano.'
      b. magtudlo. V· <agent, theme, goal>

All the verbs in sentences 1-3 are prefixed with actor-focus verbalizing affixes which also inflect the verbs with different aspects. In sentence (1a), the verb **gahatag** *'is giving'* is in the imperfective aspect and has three theta roles[5] to dispense, namely, source, theme, and recipient as reflected in the argument/thematic structure in (1b). The **DP si Juan** is the canonical structural realization (CSR) of the source theta role; **DP ug bulak** *'a flower'* the CSR of theme theta role; and **PP kang Teresa** *'to Teresa'* the CSR of recipient theta role. In sentence (2a), the verb **nagpadala** *'sent'* is in perfective aspect and has three theta roles to assign, namely, source, theme, and benefactive as reflected in the argument/thematic structure in (2b). The **DP si Juan** is the CSR of the source theta role; **DP ug hinabang** the CSR of theme theta role; and **PP kang Teresa** *'to Teresa'* the CSR of benefactive theta role. In sentence (3a), the verb **magtudlo** *'will teach'* is

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[5] Theta roles are semantic relationships of the determiner phrases (DP) to the verb or predicate.

in the contemplative aspect and has three theta roles to assign, namely, agent, theme, and goal as reflected in the argument/thematic structure in (3b). The **DP si Juan** is CSR of the agent theta role; **DP ug Cebuano** *'the Cebuano language'* the CSR of theme theta role; and **PP kang Teresa** *'to Teresa'* the CSR of goal theta role.

In the case of Malay, the examples of ditransitive verbs are tabulated in Table 2 below. Sample sentences reflecting the sentential projection of selected verbs follow thereafter.

No.	Ditransitives	Gloss
1	meletak	to place, put something
2	memaklumkan	to inform someone something
3	memberi	to give someone something
4	memberitahu	to tell someone something
5	memperoleh	to acquire something from someone
6	mendapat	to get something from someone
7	menderma	to donate something to someone
8	menerima	to receive something to someone
9	menghantar	to send something to someone
10	mengirim	to mail something to someone

Table 2. Examples of Malay Ditransitives

Table 2 presents ten samples of Malay ditransitive verbs each of which is inflected with the actor-focus verbalizing prefix *meN-* Malay verbs are generally not inflected with aspect or tense. Temporal properties are signified by temporal adverbs or by lexicalized aspect markers such as **sedang** *'is/are'* for imperfective, **akan** *'will/shall'* for contemplative, and **sudah/telah** *'was/were'* for perfective. However, there is common consensus among Malay linguists that Malay sentences are finite by default in the absence of temporal signals. For sentential projection purposes, selected verbs in Table 2 are given sample sentences below

4.   a.   Jurujual itu akan meletak tanda harga pada barangan   itu.
          salesclerk the will put   sign price on   merchandise
          the
          'The salesclerk will put the price tag on the merchandise.'

      b.   meletak. **V** <agent, theme, goal>

5   a.   Kerajaan   akan memberi bantuan kepada mangsa tsunami itu.
          government will   give   aid   to victim tsunami the
              'The government will give aid to the tsunami victims.'
    b.   memberi **V** <source, theme, benefactive>

6.   a   Pejabat kami sedang menerima banyak aduan   daripada
          pelanggan.
          office   our   is   receive many   feedback from
          customer
          'Our office receives feedback from the customers '
    b.   menerima: V·<recipient, theme, source>

All the verbs in sentences 4-6 are prefixed with actor-focus verbalizing affix meN- which does not carry the aspectual property In sentence (4a), the verb **meletak** *'put'* has three theta roles to dispense, namely, agent, theme, and goal as reflected in the argument/thematic structure in (4b). The **DP jurujual itu** *'the salesclerk'* is the CSR of the agent theta role; **DP tanda harga** *'price tag'* the CSR of theme theta role; and **PP pada barangan itu** *'on the merchandise'* the CSR of goal theta role. In sentence (5a), the verb **memberi** *'give'* has three theta roles to assign, namely, source, theme, and benefactive as reflected in the argument/thematic structure in (5b) The **DP kerajaan** *'government'* is the CSR of the source theta role; **DP bantuan** *'aid'* the CSR of theme theta role; and **PP kepada mangsa tsunami itu** *'to the tsunami victims'* the CSR of benefactive theta role. In sentence (6a), the verb **menerima** *'receive'* has three theta roles to assign, namely, recipient, theme, and source as reflected in the argument/thematic structure in (6b). The **DP pejabat kami** *'our office'* CSR of the recipient theta role; **DP banyak aduan** *'many feedback'* the CSR of theme theta role; and **PP daripada pelanggan** *'from the customers'* the CSR of source theta role.

      Having presented the samples of ditransitive verbs and their argument/ thematic structures, the next subsection presents the analysis and discussion on the structural relations and cartography of ditransitive predicates.

Ditransitive Verbs: Structural Relations and Cartography

In relation to derivation of structural descriptions, the ditransitive cartographies are represented in this subsection showing the lexical projection of some sample sentences. Central to MP cartography is the use

of TP template[6] in representing structures and the employment of VP-Shell Analysis[7] and Uniformed Theta Assignment Hypothesis[8] By using sentences (1a) and (4a) as examples for structural representation, their cartographies are graphically represented below in (7) and (8) in the succeeding pages.
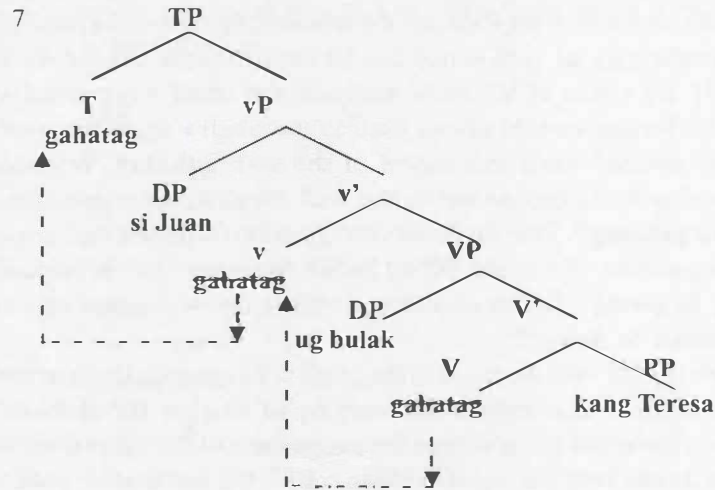
Assuming that syntactic structures are derived in a bottom-up fashion, the derivation of (7) is as follows. the syntactic object **PP kang Teresa *'to Teresa'*** is formed by the merger operation between **DP Teresa** and the preposition **kang *'to'*** Such merger is made with the checking and valuing of the oblique case of the **DP Teresa** by the preposition head **kang *'to'***

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[6] TP template makes use Tense Phrase (TP) which rewrites as Determiner Phrase – Tense Aspect/Inflection – VP This TP is headed by the by the functional head T which is the locus for all temporal properties of the structural description (Carnie2007:210-213).

[7] Also called Larsonian structure, Chomsky calls it VP shell (1995:62). The VP shell analysis was called as such by Richard Larson in 1988 in his published article *On the Double Object Construction* in his attempt to shed light on the structures of ditransitives. Technically, the VP shell is composed of a higher VP which is headed by a null V to which the lexical verb moves or adjoins to and a lower VP containing the lexical verb and its complement (Larson 1988:350-351). The current reading is that the VP shell has both the small vP and the big VP which is the locus of the external and internal arguments (Boeckx 2008:132).

[8] Uniformed Theta Assignment Hypothesis (UTAH) holds that arguments are assigned theta roles in their theta positions irrespective of verb morphology which bears on the preservation of the word order in any particular language. Radford (2009:484) explains that " .each theta-role assigned by a particular kind of predicate is canonically associated with a specific syntactic position "

This preposition phrase (PP) is then merged with the lexical verb **gahatag** *'is giving'* forming the **V' gahatag kang Teresa** *'is giving to Teresa'* This building of the intermediate structure V' facilitates the assignment of the goal theta role to the **PP kang Teresa** *'to Teresa'*. This particular **V'** is then merged with the **DP ug bulak** forming the big **VP ug bulak gahatag kang Teresa** *'a flower is giving to Teresa'* Observe the ungrammaticality of this utterance which is caused by the non-satisfaction of the requirement of the morphology of verb which can be satisfied only via movement as shown (7). By virtue of VP Shell Analysis, the small v is posited which attracts the lexical verb to adjoin itself to the small v since the small v is affixal by nature.[9] Such movement of the verb **gahatag** *'is giving'* is represented with the broken arrow and with the strikethrough on the copy of the verb ~~gahatag~~[10]. This structural configuration facilitates the assignment of the theme theta role to the **DP ug bulak** *'a flower'* by the lexical verb **gahatag** *'is giving'* It also checks and values the accusative case of the **DP ug bulak** *'a flower'*.

With lexical verb adjoined to the small v, this creates the intermediate structure small v' and signals the merging of another **DP si Juan** The building of the small vP facilitates the assignment of the agent theta role to the **DP si Juan**. Being merged at [Spec, vP][11], the nominative case of the **DP si Juan** is checked and valued by the complex **v+gahatag**, the causativized version of the lexical verb **gahatag** *'is giving'* By virtue of the Phase Theory, this small vP is a phase since the argument/thematic structure is fully represented. By virtue of PIC, only the edge of the phase can be penetrated and not the domain of the verb. The operation Spell-out operates on the deletion and removal of the LF-uninterpretable features from the narrow syntax. After the removal thereof, such structure is transferred to the Phonological Form (PF).

After the small vP underwent transfer, computation continues with the causatived verb complex **v+gahatag** being moved to the locus of T and projects the structure T' after the merger with its complement small vP It

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[9] The small v is the shorthand for the light verb which functions as the head of the vP-shell. It is causative by nature and assigns the agent theta role to the subject (Carnie 2007: 377-380).

[10] A strikethrough represents the copy of a lexical item left behind by the moved element in the computation

[11] The notation [Spec, vP] is read as the Specifier of vP which is the syntactic position for the internal subject-DP which also the syntactic position for assigning nominative case for languages like Cebuano but not for Malay.

is proposed that in the agentive constructions, the functional head T in Cebuano is not imbued with the [EPP] feature[12] and the *u*Case feature[13] With the absence of these formal features in the Cebuano T, movement of the **DP si Juan** to [Spec, TP][14] is not licensed. The resulting TP is then capped with the null CP[15] with the declarative force and is a phase by itself. The whole sentential structure is convergent at the interfaces and therefore it is grammatical.

8.
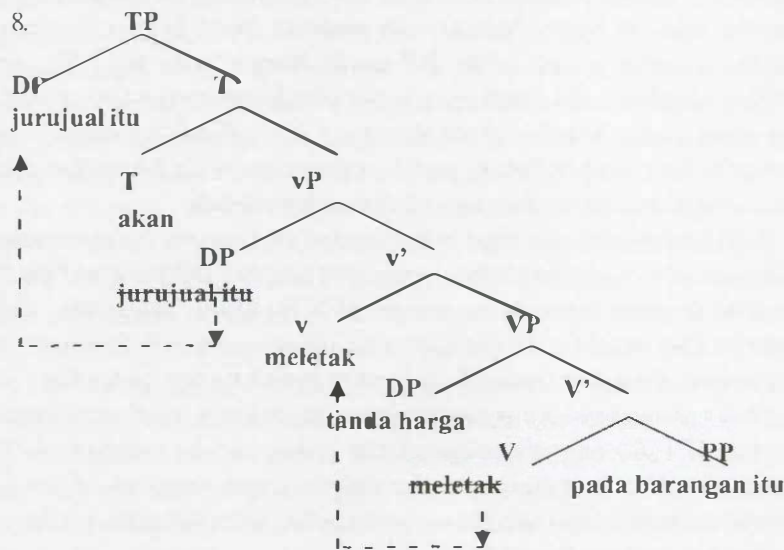
In the case of the cartography in (8) the derivation is as follows: the syntactic object **PP pada barangan itu** *'on the merchandise'* is formed by the merger operation between the already formed **DP barangan itu** *'the merchandise'* (via merge which is the first syntactic object formed

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[12] EPP means Extended Projection Principle as used in the Principles and Parameters Approach which requires all clauses to have a subject. In MP the uninterpretable [EPP] is carried by a functional head or a probe which requires movement of a goal to the functional head's specifier position. This goal movement facilitates the checking and valuing of the [*u*EPP] of the functional head and eventually undergoes deletion (Adger 2003 211-222).

[13] This notation *u*Case means uninterpretable Case feature which should undergo checking and eventual deletion to ensure the convergence at the interface called logical form (LF).

[14] The notation [Spec, TP] is the shorthand for the syntactic position which serves as the landing site for the moved DP which moved out of vP Such movement is motivated by the checking and valuing of uninterpretable features.

[15] The CP is the complementary phrase which is headed by the functional element C and is the locus of complementizers in any languages. CP is the cap of all structural derivations.

thereof obscured for exposition purposes) and the preposition **pada** *'on'*
Such merger is made with the checking and valuing of the oblique case of
the **DP barangan itu** *'the merchandise'* by the preposition head **pada**
'on' This PP is then merged with the lexical verb **meletak** *'put'* forming
the **V' meletak pada barangan itu** *'put the price tag on the merchandise'*
thereby facilitating the assignment of the goal theta role. This particular V'
is then merged with the **DP tanda harga** *'price tag'* forming the big VP
This structural configuration facilitates the assignment of the theme theta
role to the said DP by the lexical verb **meletak** *'put'* It also checks and
values the accusative case of the **DP tanda harga** *'price tag'.* By virtue
of VP Shell Analysis, the small *v* is posited which attracts the lexical verb to
adjoin itself to the small *v* since the small *v* is affixal by nature. Such
movement of the verb **meletak** *'put'* is represented with the broken arrow
and the strikethrough on the copy of the verb ~~meletak~~.

With lexical verb adjoined to the small *v*, this creates the intermediate
structure small *v'* and signals the merging of another **DP jurujual itu** *'the*
salesclerk' (formed through the merger of **N jurujual** *'salesclerk'* and **D**
itu *'the'*). The building of the syntactic object small vP facilitates the
assignment of the agent theta role to the **DP tanda harga** *'price tag'* This
small vP is a phase since the argument/thematic structure is fully represented.
By virtue of PIC, only the edge of the phase can be penetrated. The
operation Spell-out operates on the deletion and removal of the LF-
uninterpretable features from the narrow syntax. After the removal thereof,
such structure is transferred to the PF

After the small vP underwent transfer, computation continues with
the lexical item **akan** *'will'* being drawn from the numeration and projects
the structure T' which signals the merger with its complement the small vP
Since the functional head T is imbued with the [EPP] feature and the *u*Case
feature, the **DP jurujual itu** *'the salesclerk'* must move to occupy the
[Spec, TP] to value and check its nominative case via Last Resort[16] The
resulting TP is then capped with the null CP with the declarative charge
and it itself a phase. The whole sentential structure is convergent at the
interfaces and therefore it is grammatical.

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[16] Last Resort means that movement operation is licensed only if it allows the elimination of
uninterpretable formal features (Hornstein, Nunes, and Grohmann (2005. 293).

Conclusion

As shown in the preceding sections of this paper, Cebuano and Malay languages exhibit some similarities and differences. Such similarities and differences include some morphosyntactic characteristics and typological aspects. Using the TP template, Cebuano is VSO and Malay is SVO Since T is the locus of the temporal properties in these languages, Malay has the lexicalized temporal markers while Cebuano has the grammaticalized equivalent. Such difference is clearly seen wherein Malay T dominates the lexicalized markers while Cebuano T dominates the inflected verb, thus the movement of V to T in Cebuano. On ditransitives, Cebuano and Malay differ in two aspects. First, Cebuano ditransitives are constrained in the projection of sentential structures without the verbs affixed with an agentive affix while Malay ditransitives can do so even if such verbs are in bare form. Secondly, Malay ditransitives necessitate A-movement of a relevant DP to [Spec, TP] while Cebuano does not. Thus, Malay subjects are in [Spec, TP] while Cebuano subjects remain at [Spec, vP] This structural phenomenon is captured in the structural representation wherein Malay has the strong EPP feature in the functional head T and Cebuano has weak feature. On applicatives, Cebuano and Malay share some commonalities such as that Malay and Cebuano applicatives can be derived from any type of predicates   unaccusative, unergative and accusative   by affixing the relevant applicative affix thereby augmenting the inherent valence of the base verb. Both applicative structures necessitate A-movement of a relevant DP to [Spec, TP] for convergence at the LF and PF interfaces. By virtue of Last Resort, both languages have subjects at [Spec, TP]

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