A Thematic Analysis of Spanish Word Order

Theoretical and Pedagogical Aspects

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by

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Abstract

Word order variations in Spanish have led scholars to consider it as a language with flexible word order in comparison with languages such as French or English. Attention has been mainly centred on syntactic variations involving the placement of the subject. Today, the widespread assumption is that Spanish is a pragmatically motivated language; consequently, studies have started to focus on real occurring data in order to study the pragmatic factors that intervene in the creation of meaning. The fact that the pragmatic factors are independent of position makes it difficult to use them as indicators to explain word order variations. Further, studying language in context implies that it more complex to single out a specific feature, because every element of the system collaborates in the creation of meaning. Also, the application of several criteria implies that criteria often override one another. Thus, despite the fact that some valuable studies present persuasive and sound explanations of word order, the hypotheses are partially corroborated by data. Ultimately, it is nearly impossible to predict or anticipate word order realizations on the basis of the criteria adduced by analysts.

The notion of language as being primarily functional forms the core of the Systemic model, which uses grammar to explain the correlation between language realization (wording) and function (meaning). This model provides a systematic account of how the language components interweave in the creation of meaning, producing a given wording. This is achieved by the superimposition of three structures: experiential, interpersonal and textual. The suitability of the textual structure (theme-rheme) to study the construal of texts is well documented by abundant studies in English. This type of studies has started to extend to languages other than English, including German, Chinese, Finnish, Portuguese and Spanish. Given that theme enjoys a fixed position in the clause, a thematic analysis seems to be an optimal tool to study word order variations in Spanish.

Considering language meaning as functional implies that different communicative purposes will exhibit different linguistic realizations. This means that the text samples studied must represent different communicative purposes, so that the results can be studied comparatively; thus, a further motivation for using this model is the fact that thematic analysis allows us to highlight features in a systematic way for purposes of comparison. Comparison is central to the aim of this research not only to compare and contrast different types of text but also to apply findings to the educational setting. Consequently, the data selected here to apply the thematic analysis include different types of text, representing the types of text that learners of advanced language courses are required to study and to produce.

The results of the thematic analysis show similarities across the texts belonging to the same register and purpose. The results of the spoken data illustrate how interaction amongst speakers is created, maintained and developed by the use of personal pronouns in fronted position. The comparison of results highlights a strong correlation between thematic patterns and purpose, on the one hand, and thematic patterns and formal realizations, on the other. Overall, the results strongly support the need to incorporate thematic analysis in the studies of word order variations in Spanish and to incorporate thematic analysis in language teaching.

1. Introduction

Word order in Spanish, and particularly word order in Spanish compared to other languages such as English, has attracted a great deal of attention. It has been claimed repeatedly that Spanish belongs to that category of languages that can be classified as 'free-word-order'. In fact, what 'free' means is that it shows variations from the typological (SVO) order. Some researchers, however, have noted that these variations are not arbitrary but pragmatically controlled. Hence criteria used to study word order variations range from formal to pragmatic values, including length of the noun group functioning as subject, information value, semantic properties of subjects and verbs, and pragmatic meaning such contrast, focus and so forth. However, none of the attempts to link word order variations to any of these factors have been successful in offering conclusive results. Thus, the most recent work undertaken in this area, by López Meirama (2006), concludes that these criteria account for tendencies in word order variations 'not hard and fast rules'. This seems to be due to the fact that more than one factor intervenes on word order choices and that it is difficult to discriminate or prioritise the effects that each of these factors has in the wording of the clause.

What is clear is that the system of Spanish differs from other languages, such as English, in certain word order arrangements and that it offers speakers two or more grammatically correct alternatives of word order. Thus a speaker may place the subject, for example, in several positions within the clause: SV, VS; or even omit it. It has been agreed that choosing one ordering over another leads to differences in meaning, but it has not been made clear yet what these meanings precisely are. The motivations that speakers have to choose one order seem to be manifold and seem to vary according to language use.

Halliday's functional grammar is based on the systemic theory, which provides an account of 'meaning as choice, by which a language, or any other semiotic system, is interpreted as networks of interlocking options' (Halliday 1994: xiv). The word *functional* in the Systemic model is understood as a system that explains 'how language is used' (Halliday 1994: xiii). The focus of the systemic model of language use appears to

be adequate to explore an aspect of the Spanish language that is clearly rooted in language use.

Under this model the message of a clause is made up of three meanings or dimensions, which means that a clause is simultaneously interpreted as a 'representation', as an 'interaction' and as a 'message'. Each of these meanings corresponds to one metafunction, namely: Experiential, Interpersonal and Textual.

The experiential metafunction accounts for the clause as a representation of experiences, it 'models' the 'happenings' in the outside world, which are represented in the clause as processes (verbs), participants (subjects, objects) and circumstances. Processes are of various kinds: material, mental and relational. The participants are identified according to the type of processes. For example, material processes, which roughly correspond to processes of doing, have typically an actor (the person carrying out the action) and a goal (the person or object affected by the action) as main participants; they may have circumstances as well: when, how, why it was done.

The interpersonal metafunction is concerned with how the experiential 'content' is exchanged between the speaker (writer) and the receiver; that is, the function of 'telling' is only one of the many functions that we can carry out, and asking, demanding, seeking approval and requesting are examples of the others. This metafunction is concerned with the clause as an interactive act. The system of grammar has specific items in order to carry out this function; this means that the same message (experiential content) can be exchanged differently. For this purpose, the clause is divided into two units, the mood and the residue. The subject and finite verb belong to the mood and the predicator, complements and adjuncts to the residue. The mood in the English clause is vital to carry out the interpersonal exchange of a clause. For example, in a statement the order is subject + finite verb whereas in a yes/no interrogative clause the order is finite verb + subject. The finite verb expresses both tense and modality: 'I did', 'I can'. The subject "expresses the entity that the speaker wants to take responsibility for the validity of the proposition being advanced in the clause" (Thompson 1996: 45). This apparent complexity stems from the fact that meaning is the result of several interweaving factors. Each set of meanings interacts in the clause. The Systemic model accounts for this. When real examples are examined, we can appreciate better how the system operates.

Consider the following pair of sentences:

ABC (15)   *La policía nacional se ha hecho cargo de las investigaciones del caso* (15) *y en sólo unas horas consiguió localizar el vehículo del agresor*

El País (24)   *El vehículo fue localizado poco después aparcado en la calle de las Canteras de la vecina localidad de Ansoáin.*

Both sentences represent the same reality in experiential terms: 'the police have found the car of the attacker'. The car is the goal of the verb meaning 'find', it is what has been found; but in interpersonal terms, the car is the complement in 15 and the subject in 24. In clause 15, the police are made responsible for the validity of the proposition. This sentence can be contested by saying 'it was not the police; it was a local farmer'. In 24 the vehicle holds the validity. The sentence can only be contested by saying 'the car was not found'. In simpler terms, the journalist has started the sentence from a different element in the clause; that is, he has chosen a different theme.

This leads to the third metafunction, in which the clause is organised as a communicative event, as a message. The clause is divided in two parts; the theme and the rheme. The theme is the first part of the clause, the rest is the rheme. The thematic status is assigned by position; thus, theme is fixed in the clause. This is not the primary reason for which theme analysis has been chosen here as a tool to study word order realizations in Spanish, but it is indeed an essential one.

In a given clause these three distinct structures are 'mapped on to one another to produce a single wording' (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 64). It is important to emphasise that each metafunction contributes of a kind of meaning, which combine together produce a message. By singling out one the three metafunctions, we can focus our attention on one particular structure without losing the perspective on the system as a whole.

Theme analysis will be used in this study with the aim of identifying possible correlations between theme choice and word order realizations. Therefore, the focus will be mainly on the textual metafunction: theme and thematic patterns. For a full account of Functional Grammar see Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985, second edition 1994), and the third edition co-edited with C Matthiessen (2004). The complexity of the system should not be underestimated; for a more novice-friendly account see Thompson (1996, second edition 2004) *Introducing Functional Grammar.*

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Thompson's introduction to functional grammar is intended for students and teachers; therefore it provides a step-by-step approach with comparison to the traditional grammar terminology. Besides the theoretical rationale and explanations, both editions contain practical suggestions for analysis and exercises. The second edition (2004) refers specifically to the new additions found in Halliday's (and Matthiessen's) third edition. Alternatively, see Bloor and Bloor (1995) and Berry (1975).

The study of theme has been developed and applied mainly to English; the realization of theme structure in other languages is still open to debate. Vasconcellos (1985; 1992, in McCabe 1999) shows that the Hallidayan notion of theme is valid across languages. She uses theme analysis as a tool for translation in Portuguese texts and their translations into English, to prove this. Mauranen (1993, 1996) applies theme to Finnish, even though Finnish and English differ in areas such as the role of the subject and word order. For translation purposes, Munday (1997) uses theme as a tool to compare a Spanish original text and the counterpart English translation.

In the present study thematic analysis of English and Spanish texts have been compared, not only to show the applicability of this analytical tool to Spanish but also to illustrate the similarities and discrepancies between the two languages as regard thematic content. This is considered relevant because one of the main aims here is to apply the eventual results to teaching and learning Spanish in the educational system in England. Further, two news report articles from the Spanish press have been thematically analysed and compared in order to establish similarities due to register and purpose. Comparative studies are one of the main principles associated with the Systemic model; as Stubbs (1993: 2) remarks, "texts and text types must be studied comparatively across text corpora". McCabe (1999), for example, uses the theme-rheme construal to compare history text books in Spanish and in English. She finds that the analysis is fit for purpose in more than one way: in genre analysis and comparative studies. While the analyst acknowledges some problems in the application of the system in both languages, she defends it on the basis that texts in both languages fit the categories provided by the system well, despite differences in word order between both languages. McCabe concludes that besides the three functions represented by the three metafunctions, the theme pressure also stems from word order constraints imposed by the grammatical

system. Since the Spanish grammatical system shows alternative word order arrangements, I advocate here the opposite; the application of theme analysis to identify the pressure that the theme imposes on word order choices. Therefore my aim is twofold. First of all to determine to what extent the thematic structure accounts for word order realization in Spanish; that is, the effect that thematic pressure has on the choice of word order. This will be done by studying and comparing samples of different text types. Secondly, to examine learners' thematic choices in order to compare those choices to the findings obtained from the analysis of sample texts. This comparison will be used to identify areas which may cause problems to learners and to make suggestions aimed at helping teachers and learners.

Chapter 2 provides a background in the study of theme; it also provides an account of the identification of the theme in Spanish for clauses of the three modalities.

Chapter 3 illustrates the application of thematic analysis in Spanish by examining an original extract in Spanish compared with the counterpart translation in English.

Chapter 4 gives a review of previous work done in respect of word order in Spanish.

In Chapter 5 the results of the thematic analysis of three types of text are discussed.

Chapter 6 shows results of the thematic analysis of students' work in comparison with findings of the Spanish academic text analysed in chapter 5.

Chapter 7 provides a set of suggestions intended to address the areas of concern identified by the analysis of students' work.

Chapter 8 provides overall conclusions for the study, both in terms of the method and of its application.

2. Theme

2.1 Theme and Given Information

Theme analysis is increasingly being used in discourse analysis, with successful results. An agreement, however, on the definition and the function of theme has not been reached among scholars. Therefore, before carrying out a thematic analysis it is necessary to specify the notion of theme and the unit of analysis followed in the present study; it is also necessary to stipulate how to identify theme in the different types of clauses.

It was Mathesius (1961[1]) who first talked about 'theme' and 'rheme', tracing these concepts back as early as 1885. He used a different terminology to define 'theme' and 'rheme', this being the 'basis' and the 'nucleus' respectively. This sentence structure has been widely explored by others members of the Prague School, and it is currently broadly known, but not without controversy, as 'theme' and 'rheme', terms coined by Jan Firbas. For Firbas (1986: 54) 'theme' "expresses what the sentence is about and constitutes the point of departure in the development of the communication". This concept of theme is closely associated with Communicative Dynamism (CD): "The element or elements in the theme carry the lowest degrees of CD" (ibid). Each linguistic element carries a certain degree of CD, which contributes towards the communication process. The degree of CD is affected by three factors: linear modification, the contextual factor, the semantic factor, and – in the spoken language – intonation. The message starts with the 'theme', which has the least communicative dynamism, and it culminates in the 'rheme', which has the highest degree of communication. Firbas emphasises that 'theme' in Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP) is not position-bound.

Outside the Prague school, Halliday (1994) borrows the terms 'theme' and 'rheme' and defines 'theme' as the first element in the clause, "the starting point of the message". Halliday remarks that 'theme' is identified as the initial element, but its definition – "that with which the clause is concerned" – is functional and not formal. Thus, for Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP) the element that conveys given

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[1] Originally published in Czeck in 1961, it was translated into English in 1975 by J. Vachek.

information is the 'theme'; whereas in the Hallidayan approach, the initial element in the sentence is the 'theme', regardless of whether it conveys given information or not.

Based on these two definitions, a sentence such as the example provided by Firbas (1995: 213) 'A strange figure entered the room' has two different thematic interpretations. For Firbas 'the room' is the theme and the rest is non-thematic with the message being the new information 'a strange figure', which is the rheme. According to Halliday 'a strange figure', as the initial element, is the theme despite its communicative weight. The indefinite article 'a' implies that 'a strange figure' has not been mentioned before and it is not understood within the extra-linguistic context either. This leads Firbas to assign the peak of the message, i.e. the 'rheme', to 'a strange figure'.

Fries (1995a) detects some problems arising from the FSP definition of theme or 'combining approach' in that it includes two aspects in the definition: information status and point of departure. The first of these problems derives from the fact that there are several factors interacting in the definition of theme. Theme is linked to the degree of communicativeness and that is, in turn, linked to contextual, semantic and linear modification factors. Indeed, the interaction of several factors in determining the information status of a given element is reflected in the diverse definitions that the concept of given (or known) information has been associated with. These concepts include the notion of recoverability, predictability, assumed by the speaker to be in the consciousness of the addressee, presupposed information and shared information, to name just a few. This, certainly, makes the distinction between given and new rather difficult. A further problem in connection with the characterization of an item as 'given' is the fact acknowledged by some linguists (e.g. Firbas (1986, 1995), Prince (1981), Silva-Corvalán (1983)) that 'given' is not half of a dichotomy of 'given' versus 'new' but a continuum range of different degrees of givenness; thus, an item is more or less given with respect to the other elements in the discourse. Furthermore, a second concern expressed by Fries, which has also been also raised by Firbas (1986), Chafe (1976) and Vande Kopple (1986), is that it is vital to decide how long an element that has been introduced in the discourse is considered given. All these considerations pose serious difficulties in the identification of given information, and consequently make it more difficult to identify theme.

Although the Systemic (Hallidayan) approach is not without criticism, one of the obvious advantages of the definition proposed by them is that the theme is easily identified, as it is simply the initial element in the clause. Munday (2001), for example, points out that it is much more 'straightforward to implement'.

Spanish has generally been considered to be a pragmatically motivated language; as such the association between theme and given information proposed by FSP, on the one hand, and the association between theme and first position proposed by Hallidayans, on the other, has been prolific: Silva-Corvalán (1983); Whitley (2002); Hidalgo (2003); to name just a few. Thus, it has frequently been claimed that the main function of word order in Spanish is to mark the information: "various studies of Spanish word order have contended that the primary function of word order is signaling of old and new information or thematic and rhematic material" (Silva-Corvalán, 1983: 119); *"la variación en el orden de los elementos oracionales constituye uno de los recursos más importantes que emplean los hablantes para expresar la 'informatividad'"* (Hidalgo 2003: 12). (Variation in the word order of the elements in the sentence constitutes one of the most important resources that speakers use to express 'informativeness'). Note that for the majority of analysts, variation in word order tends to imply syntactic variation from the SVO order, which is considered the prototypical order. Consequently, theme as 'given' has been used to justify word order alterations of the subject position, for example. This interpretation of word order based on the correlation between given and first position fails, however, to explain not only all the cases of post-verbal subjects but also many preverbal subjects. McCabe (1999) and López Meirama (2006) observe the difficulties arising from this view. They both find examples in their data that do not comply with the given-first rule.

The assumption that given and first position coincide is fallible due to several reasons. First of all, the difficulty in identifying old and new information, as pointed out above, means that it becomes complex to determine whether an element is to be considered as old or as new information. Further, each element needs to be labelled as given or as new when in fact they belong to a scale of 'more or less new with respect to one another' (Silva-Corvalán 1983: 119). This also implies that enough of the surrounding context in which the utterance takes place needs to be examined to determine

the degree of givenness. Unfortunately, this is still not the norm, and many studies quote isolated and invented sentences as examples to illustrate the point being made. Inferable items, for example, require looking outwards to the extra-linguistic context in order to retrieve their referent from the situation. It then becomes even more difficult to determine the degree of givenness as perceived by the outside observer.

Secondly, the concepts of 'given' (and 'new') are listener/reader's oriented, but they are selected by the speaker/writer (Halliday 1994). Given information helps the listener/reader to decode new information in that it guides them towards that part of the message that is new. This is why usually the given is placed in the first part of a sentence, the thematic structure. And indeed Halliday states that "Other things being equal, [...] Theme falls within the Given, while the New falls within the Rheme" (1994: 299).

Departing from Halliday's definition, Fries (1995b), interprets the concept of 'theme' as "orienter for the listener/reader" providing the "framework for the interpretation of the message" (318). It is logical to assume that the speaker/writer intention is to facilitate the understanding of the message for the listener/reader; with that intention in mind the theme, i.e. the beginning of the clause, will be selected among those items that will help the addressee to prepare for the message, therefore given information will tend to conflate with 'theme'. That is, the information status of an element, as given, makes it more suitable to appear in initial position. This is not to say that first position per se makes an element more or less given, nor that given information falls necessarily within the theme.

The third and main flaw is derived precisely from this assumption that theme, initial position and given coincide. If the information structure and the textual structure coincide, one of the two structures is necessarily redundant. Note that for FSP theme is identified by communicative degree (independent of position) and for Systemicists theme is identified by position (independently of information weight). If both are to correspond, one of the two structures is necessarily superfluous.

Fries (1995a: 2) reiterates "that information is context (in)dependent which is *presented* as context (in)dependent" (original emphasis). He accentuates the choice, which the speaker/writer has, to present the information as context dependent or as context independent. Thus, an item, despite the fact of being easily recovered, can be

repeated and presented as new; conversely, a new item can be presented and treated as known or recoverable information. Speakers and writers can choose to place in the theme slot new (newer) information depending on the communicative purposes that they may have in mind; Prince (1981) describes "those writers [...] as being evasive, acting childish or creating suspense". Halliday (1994: 300) draws attention to the pragmatic potential which derives from combining the two systems, the information and the textual system, in order to create different effects: "putting the other down, making him feel guilty and the like".

Thus, the fact that the two systems are separated gives the speaker/writer control over the information flow, providing him or her with the power to manipulate the information in multiple ways, making the receiver feel informed, curious, uncomfortable, inadequate, patronised or the object of sarcasm. In other words, the independence between theme and given provides the speaker/writer with a tool to create different pragmatic messages.

2.2 Theme and Topic

If the Prague School definition of theme in terms of its communicative dynamism has led to an association between given and theme, part of the terminology that Halliday used in the definition of theme as "that with which the clause is concerned" (1994: 35) has prompted the association between theme and 'aboutness', a term that is mostly used in the definition of topic, which in turn is closely related to both given and first position. A good proof of how these concepts (theme and topic) have been used as interchangeable is the way in which the terms are used indistinctively. For example, Vande Kopple (1986: 76), discussing given information, states "occasionally I will use the term topic for this segment, for convenience and because many other writers define topic in this way". Casielles Suárez (2003: 2) in her article on syntactic and information structure, affirms "the division of the sentence into a) what the speaker assumes to be the departure of the sentence, which is referred to as the topic or theme [...]". Further, first position has been identified with topic and topicalization; Chafe (1976: 48), for example, identifies theme

with topic: "[...] 'the play, John saw yesterday'. The referent expressed as the play is the topic (or 'theme' as in Halliday 1967) or that the effect of placing this item at the beginning of the sentence is to 'topicalize' it".

This indistinctive use of the terms theme and topic is inflated in Spanish by the fact that both terms are often translated as *tema*; while for some analysts it captures the meaning of theme in Halliday's terms, for others it means topic in the sense of topic-prominent languages. Jiménez Juliá (2000) claims that theme (*tema*) in Spanish and English are two different concepts; he postulates that theme in English is a mandatory element deprived of a specific meaning outside the transitive structure; whereas theme in Spanish is optional and must fulfil certain features, namely introductive, contrastive and referential. He adds that theme in Spanish is closer to the notion of 'topic', which he also translates as *tema*, in the sense of topic/prominent languages. These features that Jiménez Juliá associates with theme in Spanish are some of the main features traditionally associated with 'topic'. Hidalgo (2003: 43) distinguishes between '*tema*' as theme and '*tema*' as topic in that theme is the point of departure and topic is referential and functions above sentence level.

2.3 Theme and First Position

The notion of *tema* as 'topic' refers exclusively to one type of theme, according to Halliday (1994), who draws attention to the fact that other scholars prefer the terms 'topic' and 'comment' to those of 'theme' and 'rheme'. He explains his preference for the terms theme/rheme, arguing that 'topic' refers to only one type of theme (the others being textual and interpersonal) and that topic tends to be identified with given information. Fries (1995a) also emphasises that topic is one kind of theme and that the topic is not necessarily thematic. This has also been shown by Brown and Yule (1983: 70), who argue that what is talked about is 'unlikely to be identified as one part of a sentence'.

Moreover, topic in speech is dynamic in that "topic is identified as a complex of meanings created and developed over several utterances" (Hazadiah 1993: 55). Topic, subject and indeed theme may coincide but it is not necessarily so: 'the referent of the

discourse topic [...] is not necessarily coded as subject' (Silva-Corvalán 1983: 122). Thompson (1996) goes a step further in that he prefers to call the topical theme 'experiential theme' precisely to avoid the use of the term 'topic'.

It is important then to separate clearly the concepts of given, topic and theme. Given (and new) belong to the information structure, topic (and comment) work above the sentence at discourse level and theme (and rheme) make up the textual structure at clause level. All three structures collaborate to create meaningful discourses and this close collaboration leads to occurrences where the three notions might coincide in a given element in the clause.

In this present study the systemic approach will be adopted in that 'theme' is position bound (it comes first in the sentence) and in that it is independent of its communicative weight.

2.4 Theme Boundaries

Having established first position in the clause as the criterion used here to identify theme, the second aspect to address is how far into the beginning of the sentence the 'theme' extends.

Halliday (1994), Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), Hasan and Fries (1995) and Thompson (1996, 2004) agree that an experiential element is needed within the thematic structure, i.e. a constituent that is a participant, a circumstance or a process. Thus, if a textual and/or interpersonal element precedes the experiential element, they do not exhaust completely the thematic structure, allowing any other element from the ideational world to be part of the 'theme'. Therefore, in the following example provided by Thompson (the 'theme' has been underlined)

And, oddly, he was right. (2004: 159)

the theme compromises a textual element 'and', an interpersonal element 'oddly' and an experiential participant 'he', which is realized as the subject. Since the subject happens to be the first ideational element, the three elements are then included in the thematic structure. Halliday (1994) insists that only one ideational element is needed.

Consequently, when an experiential element other than the subject (normally a circumstantial adjunct) is expressed before the subject, the latter is not included in the thematic structure. As in the following example also provided by Thompson (2004: 142):

For centuries, yellow canaries have been used to 'test' the air in mining.

In this instance the first ideational element is considered the only constituent of the thematic structure because it is the first ideational element. The sentence seems to be about 'yellow canaries', rendered as the subject; however, under this analysis the subject is not part of the 'theme'. Indeed, as said above, topic is one kind of 'theme' and that topic is not necessarily thematic.

As Thompson points out, English grammar enables different orders for this sentence:

Miners have used yellow canaries to 'test' the air for centuries.
The air has been 'tested' in mining for centuries by using yellow canaries.
(2004: 143)

There must be a reason then why both 'for centuries' and 'yellow canaries' have been placed preverbally since they could have easily been placed in the predicate. Also, it seems difficult to understand why the subject is excluded from the thematic structure.

Halliday (1994: 93) argues that in English "every independent clause requires a subject" in order to express the modality of the clause. This explains why the subject is considered part of the thematic structure in cases of ellipsis. The elided subject is presupposed according to the clause modality. In clauses expressing offers and statements the 'unmarked' understood subject is 'I', and in demanding clauses (questions or commands) the understood subject is 'You'. He adds (1994: 94)

the imperative is presented as if it was a special case, [...].But it is not; it is simply an instance of this general principle by which a Subject is 'understood'. Being a demanding clause, its unmarked subject is 'you'.

Yet, in the imperative type of clause, according to Halliday, the unmarked theme is the verb, or the finite element plus the verb; if the subject is expressed, it is considered the marked theme choice. The reasons why presupposed subjects in ellipsis are considered themes and presupposed subjects in imperatives are disregarded in the thematic analysis

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are not explicit; but this implies that the boundary between theme and rheme varies according to the modality of the clause.

Multiple themes (in which more than one element occupies the thematic structure) made of textual and/or interpersonal elements followed by a topical theme are possible because non-experiential elements do not exhaust the thematic structure; textual and interpersonal elements fall outside the transitivity structure. A full explanation of the co-occurrence of these types of themes is given in the third edition of *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (2004: 79 and ff).

One of the problems of this principle of one experiential element only is its applicability, which as Thompson admits it is not easy to implement. For example, in instances involving preposed attributes and interpolations, these are considered thematic together with the noun group being qualified. Sentence 3 below shows a preposed attribute in thematic position; sentence 7 exemplifies an interpolation in theme. (both preposed attribute and interpolation have been underlined)

> (3) *Una mujer de 37 años y madre de dos hijos, Alicia Aristegui Beraza, murió ayer apuñalada por su ex marido en Villava cerca de Pamplona. ABC*
> (7) *El agresor, que anoche seguía en paradero desconocido, estaba en libertad provisional por violencia doméstica, El País*

A strict application of this principle entails that the preposed attribute (*Una mujer de 37 años y madre de dos hijos*) and the noun (*El agresor*) respectively are to be considered as theme; however, the whole group is taken as thematic in both cases. Thompson argues that both preposed attributes and interpolations have in common the fact that they add details to the nominal to which they are attached. He states, nonetheless, that there is a choice of analysis in that interpolations can be analysed independently with their own theme and that preposed attributes can be taken as the only ideational theme. However, he concludes that it is more practical to take the whole unit as theme because the speaker has chosen to present them in that particular part of the clause.

Some scholars within the Systemic circle, including Berry (1995), Matthiessen (1995) and Ravelli (1995), have expressed concerns on the boundaries of theme. Ravelli (1995) examines the issue of theme boundary under a dynamic perspective. Beginning with Halliday's concept of theme as the 'starting point of the message', she argues that the theme sets off with the first element in the clause and moves forward till it reaches the

predicate, which is where the theme ends and the rheme starts. At the start of the clause the speaker/writer has a greater choice as to what to place first; once the first choice has been made, the possibilities begin to reduce; but the possibilities available for the thematic structure are kept open till the subject (in declarative clauses) is realised; at this stage the thematic structure starts closing till it reaches the predicate. Ravelli places the boundary between theme and rheme in the predicate. In the following example:

...and there this morning protesters gathered again after dawn...
(Ravelli 1995: 223)

'there' and 'this morning' have the potential to function either as adjunct or as subject; their function is not determined until other elements are expressed and the verb is realised.

Although Ravelli narrows her study to declarative clauses, she explains that the first ideational element is not enough to express (or indeed predict) modality if the first experiential element is not the subject, as in "These days, can we afford not to be more vigilant?" (Ravelli 1995: 222).

She also observes that the choices available to speakers/writers as potential thematic elements are greater in declarative clauses than in other modalities such as interrogative and imperative, which are much more restricted by grammatical constraints. In this respect, Ravelli cites an example (reproduced below) taken from Matthiessen (1992: 51), which illustrates how several adjuncts may occur at the beginning of the sentence;

A: 'Do you mean we're overdressed?' said the charming father of the Family.
B: In England, at this moment, for this occasion, we would be quite overdressed.

This hospitable disposition of the theme of declarative clauses is also acknowledged by Hasan and Fries (1995).

In sum, according to Ravelli's dynamic perspective, everything up to the main verb is considered to be part of the theme. This is the view also taken by Berry (1995) and Matthiessen (1995) in their respective analyses.

Halliday (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 85) reiterates that 'the Theme of a clause extends from the beginning up to, and including, the first element that has an experiential function'. However, a new category of displaced theme (underlined in the

example below) is included; this refers to a subject occurring after a marked topical theme:

> For all his integrity and high principles, <u>Robert</u> pulled a slightly fast one over his father and business partners. (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 102)

Thompson's (2004) second edition of *Introducing Functional Grammar* acknowledges this disagreement, and some of these concerns have more recently been addressed in a seminar (2007). Thompson argues that in projections (reported speech) the sayer (the subject of the reporting verb) must be interpreted as an interpersonal element; this means that an ideational element can also be part of the thematic structure. In other types of clauses theme and subject tend to conflate, capturing the meaning of 'starting point' and of 'aboutness' in one single element; but if theme and subject are separated, the subject commonly expresses continuity outside the thematic structure. Thompson's conclusions maintain the view that only the first ideational element forms part of the thematic structure. It is not a case of including the subject as part of the theme but of exploring the reasons why theme and subject may or may not conflate. Hasan and Fries (1995) also suggest a need for discussion on themes that include the subject and themes that include elements other than experiental elements.

In conclusion, Systemicists agree in that the first ideational element is part of the theme, but some extend the theme up to the main verb in order to include the subject.

These difficulties in establishing the boundary between theme and rheme have led to different solutions when theme is analysed in Spanish. Spanish has abundant cases of elliptical subjects and impersonal structures that may exhibit the verb in initial position. These occurrences of verb-initial sentences have been analysed differently by different analysts. For example, Munday (1997) identifies the omitted subject as the theme in his comparison of Spanish original, and English translations, as Halliday does in cases of ellipsis in statements and questions. Munday justifies his interpretation on the basis that considering the verb in initial position as thematic breaks the progression pattern of the Spanish original compared to the English translation. He feels that, although his decision might be a kind of imposition of the English structure onto the Spanish, such an analysis fits better with the thematic progression of the original text. In other words, the thematic progression is carried out by the subject and not by the verb. In contrast, McCabe (1999)

and Taboada (2004), who also work on comparison between the two languages, consider processes (verbs) in initial position as the theme for all types of clause in both languages, including consecutive clauses, which show subject ellipsis in the second of the pair.

In Spanish, if the subject is overtly expressed, it may occur in either preverbal or post-verbal position. This seems to indicate that the boundary between the theme and the rheme must be drawn on the predicate. For this reason, the approach followed here includes everything up to the main verb in the theme.

This application of this thematic analysis to Spanish results in abundant cases of theme-less sentences. For some analysts this means that those sentences are athematic; that is, they lack a thematic structure: e.g. Jiménez Juliá (2000) and López Meirama (2006). However, the fact that those sentences are made up of the rheme only does not mean that the thematic structure is invalid; the clause consists of two units theme-rheme, which are divided by the verb. In cases where the clause is made up of rheme only, the theme slot has been left 'empty'. The term 'empty' is preferred over other labels such as 'theme-less' or 'athematic' because it better represents an interpretation of the thematic structure as a binary unit (theme-rheme), which is an intrinsic part of the clause.

The empty theme may be retrievable from the context, that is, the co-text or the more general context where the message is produced. These empty themes will be explained in the corresponding data analysis in later sections.

2.5 Theme Function

The fact that theme is identified as the initial element in the clause seems to be congruent with Halliday's definition of theme as 'point of departure'; but his definition also included 'it is that with which the clause is concerned' (1994: 37). This original suggestion that the theme equates with topic has been rejected by Systemicists: e.g. Martin (1995) and Fries (1995b); Fries, for example, makes more explicit the function of theme as 'an orienter to the message'; theme "provides a framework for the interpretation of the message". (1995b: 318)

Speakers or writers distribute the information over the theme and rheme; the information that occurs in theme helps to provide a kind of background for the message but this binary distribution also helps to point towards that part of the clause which conveys the 'core' of the message; thus it acts as a kind of signpost in order to make the information more manageable. A good proof of this function is evident in thematising structures; in these structures the information is clearly articulated into two parts in order to direct the attention of the listener/reader towards the most relevant part of the message; that is, towards the part that the speaker/writer wishes to draw attention. Basically, placing a particular 'section' of the sentence in thematic position implies 'this is where I start but this is not the goal of my message, this is not the point I am making'.

Further, it has been noted that the theme of each clause affects the text as a whole. Thus, the theme of a clause may provide local circumstantial (spatial/temporal/causal) context for the message to be interpreted. However, since clauses come as texts rather than in isolation, the starting point of a given clause is often concerned with the previous clause(s); but it can also indicate that a change of direction is being introduced, that what is coming is the point of view of the speaker/writer. In Halliday's and Matthiessen's 2004 edition of *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* the wording of 'point of departure' is maintained but the notion of context is added: "the theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within the context" (2004: 64).

The definition of theme has evolved to include the role that theme plays above the clause; the themes of the text as a whole provide a insight on the speaker's/writer's position: the method of development (Fries, 1995b); and the theme contributes to the information flow across the text: "information flows through first position in ways that are textually significant" (Martin, 1995: 228).

Speakers/writers make more or less extensive use of the theme slot to organise their messages depending on several factors; these factors have to do with the purpose of the text and with its internal organization. At a given point, the theme slot may be left empty; particularly when the 'background' information has been established previously in the text or because it is clear from the situation; this is common in speech, where the speaker can easily assess how much/how little linguistic 'background'/ 'orienting'

information is needed, and where the main pressure is probably 'to make the point'. In other instances, particularly in writing, authors may maximise the potential of this binary structure by piling considerable amounts of information in the theme. This results in highly dense and informative clauses. Note that this information expressed in the theme may well be new to the addressee, but it does not constitute the core of the message that the writer/speaker is presenting.

2.6 Identification of Theme in Spanish

Having established the criteria followed in the present study for the identification of theme and before embarking on a comprehensive analysis of Theme in the selected texts, it is necessary to explain theme choices in Spanish according to the three modalities. It is also important to establish the choice of unit taken as the basis for the thematic analysis.

The Spanish examples quoted to illustrate the identification of theme come from the sample texts analysed in sections 3 and 5 of this thesis. However, some realizations of theme in Spanish do not occur in the selected texts; for this reason a further source of examples has been included. It consists on a short story *Luvina* by the Mexican novelist Juan Rulfo. The first motivation for this choice of data stems from the fact that the thematic content of the whole short novel can be analysed. Although I have quoted only the relevant examples, I have studied the thematic content of the entire story. The second motivation comes from the fact that *Luvina* is the name of the place where the story takes place, which gives the title to the story. This is relevant due to the relationship between theme, formal realizations of theme and the central concern of the story. Further, the novel contains narrative sections followed by dialogues; the dialogue, which holds the story together, between an older teacher and a younger teacher is of particular interest, given that the younger teacher does not talk. The reader is aware of his presence by the interpersonal references made by the older teacher.

2.6.1 The Unit of Analysis

Halliday maintains that the thematic structure exists on levels below and above the clause but he states that the main contribution towards the organization of the discourse "comes from the thematic structure of independent clauses" (1994: 61).

Different researchers tend to focus their analysis on different levels depending on the purposes of their research. These levels range from all clauses (including minor clauses) to the orthographic sentence. In academic texts, Whittaker (1995) takes as the basic unit of study the orthographic sentence. She argues that writers use the sentence to organize the contents grammatically. Ghadessy (1995), following Halliday, considers the clause as the unit on which to base his analysis to identify the thematic development of texts.

In the middle of this scale is the clause complex also known as the T-unit, "which consists of an independent clause together with all its hypotactic related clauses" (Fries 1995b: 318). This choice of unit proves to be most widespread, particularly in studies concerned with thematic progression. Berry (1995), for example, examines the theme in main clauses as the thematic choices that contribute mostly to success (or failure) in children's writing. Thompson (1996) recommends an analysis at T-unit level arguing that this is the most commonly needed level to analyse texts.

The main purpose of the present study is to study thematic choices and their formal realization in order to explain word order realizations according to the thematic demand posed by the textual construal. Since the thematic choices of independent clauses are the principal contributors to the organization of the text, it seems appropriate to use the T-unit as the basis for analysis. Occasionally, however, references will be made to thematic choices within dependent clauses in order to illustrate specific thematic patterns and word order realizations.

2.6.2 Theme Identification

In this section an account of theme in Spanish for the three modalities is offered. Since English has been widely examined in terms of the thematic structure, the focus will be on the Spanish, but constant references to English will be made for comparison purposes. For a full account of theme in the three modalities, see chapter three of Halliday's *Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985, 1994), and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004). Thompson's *Introducing Functional Grammar* (1996, 2004), chapter six, deals extensively with theme and theme identification including exercises.

In the analysis of the texts in chapter 5 of this thesis, the basic principles stated in the cited works are followed on the whole; the main significant difference concerns the extent of theme, as explained in the previous section; thus, following the work of other systemic scholars, everything up to the main verb is considered thematic.

2.6.2.1 Theme in Declarative Clauses

The theme of a declarative clause may consist of a nominal group, a prepositional phrase or an adverbial group. A nominal group functioning as subject is the default or unmarked theme choice in English; in Spanish the subject seems to be the most frequent theme in declarative clauses also, as in the following examples:

Cron. SP2. 22	Santiago Nasar se	puso un pantalón y una camisa de lino blanco.
Cron. SP2. 20	Yo	estaba reponiéndome de la parranda de la boda en el regazo de Maria Alejandrina Cervantes.
El País 25	El ex marido	había huido.

Subjects in theme position.

The second most frequent thematic element is a prepositional phrase or an adverbial group functioning as adjunct, which tends to occur before the subject: for example, *ABC*, 8.

Sobre las 9 de la mañana de ayer,	el hombre	descendió de su vehículo [...].
Circumstantial Adjunct	**Subject**	
Theme		**Rheme**

The subject may be omitted, and the adjunct is then the only experiential element overtly expressed, as in the examples below; in English the subject follows the adjunct coded as a personal pronoun.

Cron. SP2

25	En el monte	llevaba al cinto una 357 Magnum, cuyas balas blindadas, según él decía, podían partir un caballo por la cintura
26	En la época de perdices	llevaba también sus aperos de cetrería.
27	En el armario	tenía además un rifle 30.06 Malincher Schonauer, un rifle 300 Holland Mágnum, un 22 Hornet con mira telescópica de dos poderes y una Winchester de repetición.
3	Y por un instante	fue feliz en el sueño.

Circumstantial adjuncts in theme.

The most marked theme in English is a complement (object in traditional terms) that occurs in theme. While complements in theme are considered not particularly marked in Spanish, the examined data show that complements in theme appear largely coded as clitic and demonstrative pronouns; however, some occurrences of full lexical complements in theme were found in the conversational Spanish. Given that the analysis carried out here is not quantitative, it would be premature to draw conclusions, but the analysis seems to indicate that complements in theme position are largely referential and are expressed as clitic or demonstrative pronouns rather than as full lexical items.

ABC 12	Al parecer, una de las puñaladas **le**	afectó el corazón.
El País 6	**Lo**	hizo a puñaladas y en plena vía pública, en Villava (Navarra), [...]
Extr.1. 10	yo **la**	veo los viernes porque como trabajo lejos la veo los Viernes
Extr.1. 7	Yo **eso**	no lo he visto nunca
Extr.1. 14	Es que **ese libro me lo**	regaló Cristinita porque estuvimos en el congreso de literatura

Complements (marked in bold) in theme.

As said previously, modal and conjunctive elements may occur in theme alongside ideational ones, forming a multiple theme. As is the case in English, textual elements include conjunctions and conjunctive adjuncts, and interpersonal elements include modal adjuncts.

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| Cron. SP2 .4 | **pero** al despertar se | sintió por completo salpicado de cagada de pájaro. |
| Cron. SP2. 5 | **"Siempre** | soñaba con árboles". |

Interpersonal and textual elements in theme.

It has been noted by various analysts that the thematic slot of a declarative sentence is the most auspicious thematic slot to accommodate more than one ideational element; data indicate that adjuncts (or dependent clauses) and subjects tend to be the most frequent ones; but the theme may appear fairly long because each element can accommodate a series of modifications. This is particularly evident in specialised writing in Spanish.

El País 23	Las patrullas policiales	comenzaron inmediatamente la búsqueda del agresor.
Cron.SP2. 36	Santiago Nasar, que entonces era muy niño,	no olvidó nunca la lección de aquel percance.
El País 35	Alicia Aristégui, miembro de una familia de nueve hermanos se	había desplazado a vivir con su madre a la cercana localidad de Huarte-Pamplona, [...].
ABC 3	Una mujer de 37 años y madre de dos hijos, Alicia Aristegui Beraza,	murió ayer apuñalada por su exmarido en Villava, cerca de Pamplona.
Cron.SP2.15	Más aún: las muchas personas que encontró desde que salió de su casa a las 6.05 hasta que fue destazado como un cerdo una hora después lo	recordaban un poco soñoliento pero de buen humor.
SP1.1	Desde la pionera publicación de W. Labov, que fijaba una serie de investigaciones empíricas acerca de la estructura sociolingüística de las comunidades de habla urbanas, un gran progreso se	ha verificado dentro de los estudios de la variación lingüística y de los métodos de análisis cuantitativo.

Heavy themes

At the other end of the scale, the theme slot may appear empty in verb initial sentences. This is the case when the subject (and theme) of a clause are carried over from the previous clause. The verb ending ensures that the referent of the elided subject is clear. In English, in these cases, the subject is expressed by means of the corresponding personal pronoun.

Cron. SP2:

1	El día en que lo iban a matar, Santiago Nasar se	levantó a las 5.30 de la mañana para esperar el buque en que llegaba el obispo
2	[Santiago Nasar]	Había soñado que atravesaba un bosque de higuerones donde caía una lluvia tierna.
11	Tampoco Santiago Nasar	reconoció el presagio.
12	[Santiago Nasar]	Había dormido poco y mal, sin quitarse la ropa

Sentences 2 and 12 show empty themes.

In the above examples it seems clear that the subject has been elided in the second clause of each pair, thus the theme is carried over from the preceding sentence; in the first pair (1 and 2), arguably, both the adjunct (*El día en que lo iban a matar*) and the subject (*Santiago Nasar*) are to be understood as the theme being carried over from sentence 1. Whether considering as theme of 2 the whole theme of sentence 1 or just the subject, the theme slot can easily be 'filled' from the previous sentence.

In other instances of elliptical subjects, the theme slot may accommodate other ideational elements, typically circumstantial adjuncts as in the examples seen earlier. In these cases it is more difficult to justify the inclusion of the elliptical subject as part of the thematic structure. One argument to support the inclusion of the subject as part of the theme is that the speaker or writer has the choice to place the subject in post-verbal position as part of the rheme and also to omit the subject through the use of an impersonal construction.

In the example below, the textual theme and the circumstantial adjunct are the elements placed in theme; the subject occurs in the rheme postponed to the verb (underlined):

Luvina p.65	Porque en Luvina sólo	viven <u>los puros viejos</u> y [...].

Subject in rheme

It has been claimed that adverbials trigger subject inversion, but there are multiple examples of adjuncts and subjects together in thematic position; the subject occurs in the rheme only when the adjunct is the only ideational theme. The example just shown comes from *Luvina*, the village which gives the title to the short story. It is not difficult to see how the place itself has a central role in the story; however, precisely because it is a name of a place the type of processes (verbs), which can be combined with *Luvina*, as subject,

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are limited; by rendering *Luvina* as an adjunct, the writer has a wider range of processes available to choose from. In order to ensure that Luvina takes the central role, the rest of the ideational content is expressed in the rheme.

Further, it is also important to emphasise that the realization of, for example sentences 2 and 12 above, with the omitted subject is only possible in this context where the previous sentence explicitly expresses the subject. Further explanations in support of this interpretation will be attempted in the thematic analysis in sections 3 and 5.

If the elliptical subject is the first person pronoun (*yo*), the second (*tú*) or (*usted*), the referent of the elided subject may need to be retrieved from the extra-linguistic context and not from the previous part of the text: 'I' the speaker, 'you' the addressee. This typically occurs in speech and in written texts that reproduce speech. This implies that the very first utterance can exhibit an omitted subject. The language system uses the extra-linguistic context to its advantage. This does not mean, however, that the first and second person personal pronoun subjects are elided by default as has often been claimed. Their explicitness depends on the situation; for example, in a dialogue between two people the references are much more clear than in a conversation where several people are taking part.

In some instances of empty themes, the corresponding pronoun of the elided subject cannot be retrieved; as in 23, simply because Spanish lacks an empty dummy pronoun such as English 'it', which has been used in the English translation.
Cron. SP2:

22	Santiago Nasar se	puso un pantalón y una camisa de lino blanco, ambas piezas sin almidón, iguales a las que se había puesto el día anterior para la boda.
23	[el atuendo]	Era un atuendo de ocasión.
22	Santiago Nasar	put on shirt and pants of white linen, both items unstarched, just like the ones he'd put on the day before for the wedding.
23	It	was his attire for special occasions.

The referent of the elided subject is the attire (trousers and shirt) mentioned in previous clause, but it lacks a grammatical coding. Note that in English the lexical content of the pronoun 'it' has to be retrieved from the previous sentence in the same way as the elided subject has to be retrieved in the Spanish. The closest referring pronoun Spanish has is the deictic pronouns *este,* but its use tends to be fairly restricted.

Finally, there are other empty theme slots where the missing element is not the subject; this makes it more difficult to retrieve a plausible theme from the preceding context:

Extr.1 14	Es que ese libro me lo	regaló Cristinita porque estuvimos en el congreso de literatura.
Extr.1 14	y	vino ese escritor.

There are other structures in Spanish, which simply do not take a grammatical subject. This is the case of the so-called impersonal structures: time expressions, verbs of meteorological phenomena, and existential *hay*. These constructions, similarly to the so-called subject-inversion VS, may exhibit other elements in thematic position or may exhibit an 'empty' theme.

Time expressions tend to function as a circumstantial adjunct, as in these examples:

El País. 42

Hace unos dos años la pareja se		separó
Circumstantial Adjunct	**Subject**	
Theme		**Rheme**

The English counterpart can be glossed as 'it is two years since the couple separated' or 'the couple separated two years ago'. The first of these two readings keeps the order closer to the original while the second wording renders the meaning as it is probably meant in Spanish, because most speakers do not perceive *'hace'* as a verb but as a preposition.

In the case of the other impersonal structures, the difficulty in retrieving the theme when it appears empty comes from the fact that the theme is provided by the previous part of the text but is not necessarily a structural part of the clause, at least not one that is perceived to be essential.

For example, expressions related to meteorological processes may appear with an empty theme, but circumstances of time or space are commonly found in theme. The extract below is part of the 'dialogue' between the teachers from *Luvina* (p. 61).

-.Pues sí, como le	estaba diciendo
Allá	llueve poco
A mediados de año	llegan unas cuantas tormentas que azotan la tierra y la desgarran, [ ].
"...Sí,	llueve poco

The adverbial *allá*, which refers to *Luvina*, is the theme fronted to *llueve*; it provides the geographical framework for the message. It is not random that the next clause has in theme an expression of time, since the weather is mostly linked to a geographical location or a period of time. Good evidence of this is found in the weather forecasts, which are always given with reference to when and where. The last sentence, referring to rain omits the geographical referent; it is no longer needed because the reference has been made clear previously. In small talk, the here and now provides the contextual frame for the comments that we often make about the English weather. The difference between Spanish and English is that the latter uses a grammatical 'token' (*it*), which takes the place of the subject.

Similarly, existential processes (*hay*) are tied to space and, to a lesser extent, to time. In the following example, also taken from *Luvina*, the older teacher is reproducing a dialogue with his wife that took place on the first day of their arrival in *Luvina*:

-¿dónde	está la fonda?
-No	hay ninguna fonda

Luvina (p.63)

The first utterance, the question, has as theme *dónde*, which inevitably refers to place; and the expected response will normally be a place; however, the answer is 'there isn't any'; the teacher listening (and the reader) understands the reply as *en Luvina no hay ninguna fonda*. But when the dialogue took place, he and his wife were standing in *Luvina*, hence the spatial reference was omitted in both the question and the answer. The language system takes advantage of the extra-linguistic context to encode the meaning.

Berry (1995: 66) describes the existential 'there' (is/are) in English as a 'pass option' in that the writer has decided not to make use of the thematic slot to foreground any information. She argues that 'there' contains neither experiential nor interpersonal meaning. Since all the texts Berry analyses are about Grantham as a tourist destination, most themes have the place itself or a building or a particular sight in the place as theme. In a sense existential 'there' cannot be detached from a location – unless it is used

metaphorically. The existential 'there' implies 'in Grantham (or a place within it) there is...' In the same discussion, Berry includes 'it', which indicates that the writer continues with the same aspect/topic. This leads her to label thematic 'it' as the current theme.

In existential clauses, Halliday considers only 'there' as theme, whereas Thompson considers that the verb is also needed as part of the theme; 'there is/are'.

In the analysis of the selected texts, I have considered that the theme slot is empty, and that the missing element is retrievable from the previous part of the text, although this obviously is not the subject. Thus, in agreement with Berry, the corresponding Spanish themes to 'it' and 'there is/are' are considered empty; the theme is retrievable from the context. Individual empty themes and the effect that choosing many of these empty options has in the text will be seen in later sections.

2.6.2.2 Theme in Interrogative Clauses

Interrogative (and imperative) clauses have been less studied in terms of their thematic elements mainly because of the difficulties attached to the identification of theme in clauses other than declarative. Many analysts opt for excluding them from their data.

Firstly, interrogatives need to be studied in full contextualised discourses, as with any other type of clauses. The main communicative function of an interrogative clause is the requesting of information from the addressee; thus, interrogatives, with the exception of rhetorical questions, occur mainly in speech or writing which reproduces speech. Secondly, it is important that a question must be considered together with its corresponding response, as both are part of the same communicative process.

In Spanish, as is the case in English, there are two types of interrogative clauses: yes/no and wh- interrogative. In the wh-type the theme is made up of the question word on its own or the noun group to which the question word belongs. The question word makes up the theme. Theme in wh-interrogative clauses:

Extr.1. 5	- ¿y en cual	echan ésa?
Extr.1. 7	¿Y a qué hora	echan eso?
Luvina	¿Dónde	está la fonda?

In the second type (yes/no questions) the requested information is polarity; while in English the finite verb and the subject are expressed in the theme, in Spanish this type of question is formally marked exclusively by the question mark in writing and by intonation in speech. This produces a relatively high proportion of empty themes in yes/no interrogatives; in the analysis the question mark will be inserted for ease of reference.

Luvina p.63	¿	Vive alguien aquí?

Empty theme in yes/no questions.

If the subject of the interrogative clause is overtly expressed, the norm dictates subject-verb inversion. However, in the case of the second person, if the subject is overtly expressed, it often appears in initial position.

Luvina p. 65	¿Tú	conoces al gobierno?
Extr. 2.10	-¿Tú	no has visto la película?

Subject in theme in yes/no questions.

An exception to this is the formal you (*usted*), which is often overtly expressed in post-verbal position, immediately after the verb:

¿No cree usted que esto se merece otro trago? (the subject has been underlined)

The ellipsis of the subject tends to coincide with the insertion of a vocative (underlined) in final or initial position, whose referent is the subject.

Luvina p. 63	¿qué	haces aquí, Agripina?
	¿	dices que el gobierno nos ayudará, profesor?

2.6.2.3 Theme in Imperative Clauses

Imperative clauses are similar to yes/no interrogatives in that they occur predominantly in speech (or in writing that reproduces speech) and they tend to omit the subject that is supplied by the context in which the exchange takes place. The modality is expressed by means of the verb mood in Spanish and by intonation in speech and exclamation marks in writing. In English Halliday and Thompson consider the verb as the unmarked theme choice and the overtly expressed subject the marked alternative. However, Thompson states that 'marked theme' is rather more common with imperative

clauses than with the other non-declarative types. As mentioned above, the understood doer of the action in an imperative clause is normally the addressee; and it is in fact possible to make this explicit by using 'you' as a marked 'theme' choice" (Thompson 2004: 148). In Spanish, I am considering imperative no differently than any other type of elliptical subject theme. In the analysis of selected texts, including the conversation, there are no examples of imperative clauses. But *Luvina* contains a few cases, reproduced below. It is important to point out that imperative clauses are highly context-dependent. For example, in conversations body language, such as eye contact and gestures, are often used together with the verbal message; moreover, the social setting in which the conversation takes place will also anticipate some of the exchanges; this is the case in the interaction between instructor and students, doctor and patients, where the instructor and the doctor will normally make demands on the students or patients. In writting, imperative clauses are abundant in cooking recipes and manuals of how to operate appliances, for example. The purpose of the communication exchange and the context in which the exchange takes place are essential in that the default subject of the imperative is clearly defined by it. In other words, the context provides the subject.

	Tómesela
"Pero	tómese
Mejor	tómese
	¡ Vámonos de aquí!

Theme in imperative clauses (*Luvina* p. 66)

2.6.2.4 Thematising Structures

Spanish, like English, makes use of thematising structures, which enable a particular element or group to be given a prominent role as the theme. These are passivisation, thematic equative, predicated theme and thematised comment. These structures enable a syntactic organization of the clause components in order to enhance the theme-rheme structure.

Passivisations enable the goal (the object) of the active counterpart to become the theme subject, on the one hand; whilst on the other hand, they also allow the agent (doer) to be omitted.

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El País. 24	El vehículo	fue localizado poco después aparcado en la calle de las Canteras de la vecina localidad de Ansoain

It has been claimed that this grammatical resource is seldom used in Spanish, and that it is used comparatively less than in English. Green (1975) studies passive usage in Spanish and concludes that this is certainly not the case. But Spanish has more syntactic resources to express passive meanings, as will be seen later in this section.

Thematic equative, which is traditionally known as 'pseudo-cleft', is labelled as 'thematic equative' by Halliday because the theme is expressed as if it equates with the rheme. The ordering of theme and rheme is the same as in the corresponding non equative but the regrouping of the elements means that the theme is identified with the rheme (Thompson 2004).

The data analysed provide us with no examples of thematic equatives, but they do exist. There is one interesting one in *Luvina*, where the subject of the theme is placed following the conjunction *pero*: (thematic equative in bold)

Dicen los de Luvina que de aquellas barrancas	suben los sueños
pero yo lo único que vi subir	**fue el viento en tremolina [...].**

(*Luvina* p. 60)

A further structure, which enables assignment of prominence to the theme, is the predicated theme. By splitting the clause in two, this marks one of the elements as prominent in the first part (the theme). The sample texts analysed do not contain predicated themes, but one example from a different section of *Crónica* is reproduced here:

Le aconsejó que se llevara un paraguas, pero él le hizo un signo de adiós con la mano y salió del cuarto.

Fue la última vez	que lo vio.

Crónica (p. 9),

Another structure that enables marking out the theme is thematised comment. This enables the speaker or writer to place in initial position a comment to mark that what is coming is his or her own personal view.

SP1. 25	Es muy posible que	los parámetros últimos del análisis de la variación lingüística no estén en el examen de los factores de diferenciación sociológica como potencialmente relacionados con la variación lingüística.

From a grammatical point of view, the last two structures have in common the lack of a grammatical subject in the initial clause. In English the grammatical subject (it) lacks any experiential meaning but it functions as a 'place-holder' for the lexical subject which is the second clause. From a practical point of view the theme is not altered by the absence of the subejct in Spanish. In predicated structures the first clause makes up the theme; in cases of thematised comments theme includes the thematised comment and the theme of the second part of the structure:

SP1. 25	Es muy posible que los parámetros últimos del análisis de la variación lingüística	no estén en el examen de los factores de diferenciación sociológica como potencialmente relacionados con la variación lingüística.

In Spanish a thematised comment can also be expressed by a non-finite dependent clause, as in the example below

(12) *Al parecer, una de las puñaladas le afectó el corazón. ABC*

The so-called impersonal verbs in Spanish show similar structure in that there is no grammatical subject; the theme may lack ideational content as in the example below:

SP1. 15	Singularmente,	importa señalar aquí la discusión de las contribuciones de B. Lavandera, quien puso de manifiesto la falta de una teoría bien organizada de los significados que permitiera el examen cuantitativo de la variación morfológica, sintáctica y léxica.

A similar structure that thematises comment, but involves a *se*-construction:

SP1. 26	De modo que se	trata de una posición equidistante entre la etnográfica de la comunicación y el variacionismo, [...].

A further *se*-structure, which has been called *se*-passive because the logical complement shows agreement with the verb, is illustrated in the examples below:

Extr.2.8		estoy leyendo el libro
Extr.2.8	primero se	escribiría el libro
Extr.2.8	y luego se	hizo la película

El País 26	El dispositivo policial se	extendió por toda la comarca de Pamplona.

Linked to the question of impersonal *se*-constructions is the status of clitic pronouns. Clitic pronouns can appear in a preverbal position immediately before the verb

group (proclitic) or immediately after and attached to the verb (enclitic). Currently enclitic pronouns are less common, with the exception of imperative clauses (Alarcos Llorach 1994). This fact is also acknowledged by López Meirama (2006), who argues a relatively fixed position for the clitics clustered to the verbal group. This means that their thematic role is weaker. There are, however, two main reasons why they are here included as part of the thematic analysis. Clitics play a role in discourse cohesion/continuation in those cases where the referent is found in the previous clause(s). In cases of reduplication where the referent of the clitic occurs either in the theme or in the rheme of the same clause, the clitic serves as a co-referential element at the end of the theme. Their contribution to the thematic development of the text is more or less marked depending on the position of their referents, but they clearly signal the end of the thematic structure. The second motivation in support of this analysis is related to word order issues, since complements are elements that may occur in theme or rheme. Silva-Corvalán (1983) establishes a correlation between the behaviour of subjects and the behaviour of direct objects.

2.6.2.5 Theme in Clause Complex

As said above, each independent clause is here analysed separately with its respective theme. In clause complexes the T-unit (the dominant clause and its hypotactic dependent clauses) is the unit chosen for analysis. If the dominant clause appears in fronted position, the theme of the dominant is taken as the theme of the whole clause complex. If the dependent clause appears in initial position, this, together with any other element fronted to the main verb, is identified as the theme of the whole clause complex. Attention will be drawn occasionally to the theme of dependent clauses in order to illustrate a particular word order; however, I am not systematically considering the thematic structure of the dependent clauses.

The rationale in support of this approach is that dependent (finite and non-finite) clauses contribute to the thematic development in a similar way as adjuncts do (Thompson 1996, 2004). Further, McCabe (1999) adds that dependent clauses behave in

a similar way to adjuncts, both formally and functionally. Formally they can be placed in different positions within the sentence; functionally they play a part in the transitivity structure as circumstance.

Cron. SP2. 4	pero al despertar se	sintió por completo salpicado de cagada de pájaro.
Cron. SP2. 24	De no haber sido por la llegada del obispo se	habría puesto el vestido caqui y las botas de montar con que iba los lunes a El Divino Rostro, la hacienda de ganado que heredó de su padre,[...].
SP1. 23	Aunque las restricciones formales de dicha situación pueden ser superadas en parte, la interpretación y descripción de las distribuciones sociales	necesitan una estrategia de observación mas directa del interlocutor en el acto mismo de la comunicación.

One problem posed by this interpretation, as Halliday (1994) points out, is that it is not always easy to distinguish between paratactic and hypotactic relationships. Halliday provides a rule that is based on the possibility of moving the clause around within the sentence: if the clause can be displaced it is a case of hypotaxis, and if the clause is fixed in its position it is a case of parataxis.

Not all dependent clauses, however, comply with this rule; this is the case with reported clauses, which are different from the rest of adverbial subordinate clauses in more than one sense, as will be explained below.

2.6.2.6 Theme in Reported Speech

Quotes (direct speech) are considered to have a paratactic relationship with the reporting clause; that is, both clauses operate at the same level and they are to be analysed with two separate theme structures. In the case of indirect speech the relationship between the clauses is one of hypotaxis, as the two clauses form a T-unit in which the theme of the dominant clause is to be taken as the theme for the whole clause complex.

But, as McCabe (1999) points out, projections (reported dependent clauses) differ from other types of dependent clauses semantically and formally. Semantically they convey meaning other than circumstance; formally they do not comply with the ordering

rule (the order of the dependent can be reversed), since the projected clause cannot be moved from its position. Yet McCabe still finds it useful to analyse projections in the same way as the rest of the T-units, arguing that the sayer of the main clause (typically the subject) is usually relevant to the thematic progression. Thompson (1996) opts, with reservations, for considering both projecting and projected clause as 'different messages at a different level', and he analyses the theme of both clauses separately. But in a later paper (2007), discussing theme boundaries, he revisits the issue of projection and there he argues for an interpretation of the projecting clause as an interpersonal theme and the subject theme of the projected as the experiential theme of the whole clause.

In Spanish, projections present similar but not identical features to those that projections present in English. Examples such as the one below can be taken in support of Thompson's interpretation of projecting clauses as an interpersonal participant.

ABC.6	Según la Policía local de Villava, el sospechoso, Jesús Gil Peláez, se	encontraba en libertad provisional, ya que se le había relacionado con episodios de violencia doméstica en otras ocasiones.

The message has been arranged in a single clause; the logical subject of the potential projecting clauses is rendered as a prepositional phrase fronted to the main subject (*Según la Policía local de Villava*). It is then not difficult to imagine how the prepositional phrase[2] can develop into a whole clause but still retain the interpersonal value. In sentence 40, the reporting is coded as a clause,

El País 40	Fuentes próximas a la familia de la victima	manifestaron que las amenazas y coacciones a la víctima eran continuas

It would be fairly easy to reword the message to condense the reporting clause into a prepositional phrase without changing or altering the original meaning:

> *Según fuentes próximas a la familia de la víctima las amenazas y coacciones a la víctima eran continuas.*

One of the advantages of rendering the interpersonal theme as a clause is that it can take complements; the clause can accommodate more information than the prepositional phrase, as in:

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[2] Halliday (1994) postulates that prepositions are a kind of underdeveloped verb.

| El País 27 | Alfonso Ucar (UPN), alcalde de Villava, localidad en la que residió la pareja hasta su separación, | declaró que la actitud agresiva del marido era bien conocida por los servicios de atención municipal. |

There is another possible ordering, which involves the occurrence of the subject of the projecting clause in post-verbal position, as the examples below illustrate:

| Dicen los de Luvina | que de aquellas barrancas | suben los sueños |
| Dicen los de allí | que cuando llena la luna | ven del bulto la figura del viento [...] |

(Luvina p. 60)

Placing the saying verb in initial position has the effect of drawing immediate attention to the projecting process; the saying verb then seems to be even closer to the meaning and function of the preposition *según* in *según la policia*. This arrangement can also be taken as further proof of the validity of considering the projecting clause as an interpersonal element.

It has also other effects. If we look at the sentences that follow, an explanation of the expression of the subject in post-verbal position can be granted on the basis that the placement of the sayer in thematic position indicates a potential contrast with the subject theme of the subsequent sentence. The contrasted tone is highlighted by the use of the conjunction *pero* and the subject *yo*, but by removing the sayer of the first clause from the thematic position, the contrast between the two sayers is softened:

| Dicen los de Luvina que de aquellas barrancas | suben los sueños |
| pero yo lo único que vi subir | fue el viento en tremolina [...]. |

(*Luvina* p. 60)

The post-verbal placement of the subject is not only found in cases of hypotaxis but also in cases with paratactic (direct speech) clauses, when the first clause renders the direct quotation and the second of the pair is the reporting. Theme in projected clauses followed by the projecting clause in a paratactic clause complex:

El País 28	"Esta señora	había recibido en varias ocasiones malos tratos por parte de su marido",
El País 29		confirmó el alcalde de Villava.
El País 14	"Ahora	voy a por vosotros",
El País 15		aseguran los testigos que gritó Jesús.
Cron. SP2.5	"Siempre	soñaba con árboles"
Cron. SP2.6	Me	dijo Plácida Linero, su madre, evocando 27 años después los pormenores de aquel lunes ingrato.

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This means that the thematic slot of the projecting clause is either empty, as in *El País* 29 and in *El País* 15, or shows just a minimum element, such as the clitic pronoun *me* in the last of the examples. This is possible because the background against which the reporting clause is set is the actual quote. This arrangement can be compared to two coordinate clauses, where the subject theme of the second one is omitted because it is understood to be carried over from the previous clause. The difference being that in the case of reporting paratactic clauses, there is not a structural element missing but the quote itself justifies the expression of the reporting clause, hence the thematic content is not needed. Similar to coordinated clauses, the order of the two clauses cannot be altered. If the reporting comes first, then the arrangement must be S+V: "reported clause". The reporting clause, however, can be intercalated at different stages along the quotation, as example 29 and 30 show:

El País 30-32

"Hace varios meses, Alicia denunció a los servicios sociales de base del ayuntamiento las agresiones y vejaciones que sufría a manos de Jesús; Alicia y una hermana se reunieron con miembros de la Policía Municipal",	indicó Ucar,	"que decidió iniciar un servicio disuasorio de vigilancia",	explicó el alcalde.

Intercalated projecting clauses

This is further proof of the interpersonal nature of the reporting clause and of its dependency on the reported.

In sum, projections may have a hypotactic or paratactic relationship. In both cases the reporting clause codes interpersonal meanings, but as a clause can accommodate other elements.

The dependent clause of a hypotactic clause complex occurs fronted to the main clause and the subject can be expressed in initial position or can be placed postponed to its verb. The S+V order of the projecting allows for other details to be fronted in the projecting. It also enables a possible contrast between two or more informants in the subsequent clauses. The V+S arrangement prevents that potential contrast. The entire dependent clause makes up part of the theme of the main clause, which may have other elements as part of the theme.

The reporting clause of a paratactic clause complex may express the subject in preverbal position, in which case the reporting clause usually occurs before the reported one; it may also express the subject postponed to the verb if the reporting clause follows the reported one. This seems to be the most common realization in the news articles analysed in section 5.

As interpersonal elements, reporting can appear nearly anywhere in the text; this flexibility makes reporting a good device to bring into the discourse new content. Although reporting clauses in a paratactic relationship are grammatically independent of the reported clause, there is a clear interdependency in their occurrence with respect to one another.

2.7 Thematic Progression

The previous section has dealt with theme within the clause; that is, the thematic constituents and their formal representation. This section is concerned with the thematic structure of a whole text. Halliday (1994: 67) claims that the thematic organization of the clauses 'is the most significant factor in the development of a text'. Brown and Yule (1983) draw attention to the fact that different varieties of English thematise different items depending on the function of the language; for example, 'I' and 'You' are placed in theme, making clear that the prime concern of the speaker is interactional. In writing, first (thematic) position may be used to signal the way the discourse is organised; that theme serves as an orienting theme that provides the 'framework' (Fries 1995b) for the text. Fries adds that the experiential theme constitutes the method of development, which provides an insight into the way in which the ideas in the text are presented. In this respect, Thompson (1996) claims that theme signals thematic continuation or progression – which are in turn closely related to cohesion; it sets the environment for the message, it marks the internal boundaries of the text, and it provides the author's main views and concerns. Thus, thematic analysis provides linguists with an invaluable tool to study texts. Work in this respect has been fruitful in the field of genre analysis, rhetoric, teaching English for Specific Purposes, Academic English, and translation studies. Two

main lines of research are particularly relevant for the purpose of this study, namely: the correlation between thematic content and purpose, on the one hand; and the correlation between thematic development and register, on the other.

Thematic progression accounts for the type of link that exists between themes of consecutive clauses. It indicates how the text unfolds clause by clause cohesively. Daneš (1974, in Fries 1995b) proposes 3 main thematic progression patterns: simple linear theme, constant theme and derived theme. The simple linear pattern of progression describes the theme sequence in which the theme of a clause comes from the rheme of the preceding one. Constant theme consists of a chain of at least two consecutive clauses with a common theme. In the third type, the themes of successive clauses are derived from a main one, which is typically expressed at the start of the text. A further type, which resembles the simple linear theme in that the rheme of a clause produces the theme of the subsequent clause, consists of two consecutive clauses whose respective themes come from a previous rheme.

According to Mauranen (1996) this view of the text as it unfolds is 'dynamic' in that it conceives the developing of the text step by step. It serves to identify the precise connection between consecutive clauses; that is, the cohesion of the text. McCabe (1999) explores thematic progression in order to identify the readability of the text on the part of the reader.

Fries (1995b) postulates the correlation between different thematic patterns and genre. This hypothesis is difficult to prove since a given text may exhibit a mixture of all three types of thematic progression. Francis (1990 in Fries 1995b), studies texts from newspapers, which she classifies in three genres according to their function: news (inform), editorials (persuade that) and letters of complaints (persuade to). Although she finds that news reports contain a higher number of chains of constant theme, her findings are not conclusive since all the texts exhibit instances of multiple mini-chains. Bloor and Bloor (1995) associate the constant theme pattern with biographical texts, including sections of narrative when the focus is on one particular character. They also add textbooks and description of factual information as types of text containing this thematic progression pattern. Fries (1995b) is reluctant to link a particular pattern to a particular

genre; given that a text will try to achieve several purposes, the language, and consequently the theme patterns, will change as the purpose changes.

An aspect derived from this concept of thematic progression which is particularly useful, is the study of thematic patterns in conjunction with their formal realization; that is, their lexico-grammatical features. Nwogu and Bloor (1991) study journalistic medical reports and medical research articles. Their findings reflect that not only the thematic patterns were different in both types of text but also the lexis and the formal realizations of themes were different. Since the topics of the text in both sets of data were medical reports, these differences, according to the authors, stem from the context (audience) and the purpose of the texts.

This second line of research concerned with the lexico-grammatical content of themes and their correlation to purpose corresponds to Fries' hypothesis 3. Francis (1990) found that themes in news reports were mainly selected among participants (or processes) of the verbal and material type, to be in detriment of relational processes and participants. The opposite being the case for editorials and letters of complaint. Berry (1987 in Fries 1995b) finds correlations between the experiential content, formal realizations and genre. Ghadessy (1995) shows correlations between grammatical and lexico-semantic features of theme and genre through a study of sports commentaries. Martin (1995) explores the ideational content in theme, establishing a link between thematic choices and the author's motive.

Thus, research in the field of thematic progression patterns and thematic content shows the viability of a thematic analysis to identify texture (cohesive ties), to explore the method of development of a text (the author's view), and to identify the lexico-grammatical properties of thematic elements according to register and purpose.

This means that theme plays a vital role in the construal of the text. Given that theme has a fixed position in the clause, it is reasonable to assume that theme poses a significant pressure in the arrangement of the elements in the clause. Thus, it is expected that a thematic analysis will contribute to explain word order realizations.

3. Theme Analysis of an Extract from Crónica

3.1 Introduction

In order to illustrate how theme operates in Spanish and how it contributes to the construal of the text, I have chosen an extract from the novel *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* by García Márquez (1981) to carry out a thematic analysis. There are several aspects of interest in the theme choices of this extract. It belongs to the fictional narrative genre and can be considered as a short novel. The fact that the passage belongs to a short novel is important because it ensures that there are not significant differences between the first part and the subsequent chapters, as may be the case with a longer novel. I am fully aware of the methodological implications derived from analysing an extract, which has not been intended as a separate unit; however, the extract clearly shows features that enable me to treat it as a self-contained unit; this is evident not only in the graphic punctuation but in its content. It consists of the opening part of the novel, which narrates the events surrounding the death of Santiago Nasar. It starts with a sentence that introduces Santiago Nasar on the morning of his death. The passage describes him awaking after having had some dreams, which bring his mother into the picture. Then, it continues with Santiago getting dressed. The choice of clothes he makes for special occasions, such as the arrival of the bishop that day, leads to a description of his clothing and an enumeration of the activities usually involved in his daily routine; one of these duties takes the story line back to an incident in his childhood. The last sentence of the extract after this incident brings the reader back to the morning of his death and closes the sequence. This extract functions well as a complete meaningful unit; ultimately, the analysis is aimed at considering how theme works in a real occurring context rather than in considering the thematic choices of the text (or the novel) quantitatively.

The availability of a published translation[3] provides for comparison between the Spanish original and the English translation. This comparison is intended to serve a double purpose; firstly, to test the application of a thematic analysis in Spanish; secondly,

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[3] *Chronicle of a Death Foretold,* translated by G. Rabassa (1982)

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to identify possible differences between theme choices in Spanish and English, in particular differences which may stem from the grammatical system of each language.

The analysis will serve to identify which participants have been made thematic and the formal realizations of those thematic elements. A further purpose is to explore the thematic progression of the text; that is, to obtain an insight into how the text advances coherently sentence by sentence. Finally, the method of development, the type of themes (ideational, interpersonal and textual themes) and their ratio in the text, are considered in the light of the possible correlations between the distribution of types of theme and the purpose of the text.

The table below contains the themes of the successive sentences in both the Spanish text and the English counterpart; a full version of both extracts is included as an appendix at the end of this section (p.61).

	Crónica de una Muerte Anunciada	Chronicle of a Death Foretold
1	El día en que lo iban a matar, Santiago Nasar se	On the day they were going to kill him, Santiago Nasar
2	[Santiago Nasar]	He
3	y por un instante	And for an instant he
4	pero al despertar se	But when he awake he
5	"Siempre"	"He
6	Me	Placida Linero, his mother
7	"La semana anterior"	"The week before, he'
8	Me	she
9	[la madre]	She
10	Pero [ ]	but she
11	Tampoco Santiago Nasar	Nor did Santiago Nasar
12	[Santiago Nasar]	He
13	Y	and he
14	y los	and he
15	Más aún: las muchas personas que encontró desde que salió de su casa a las 6.05 hasta que fue destazado como un cerdo una hora después lo	Furthermore: all the many people he ran into after leaving his house at five minutes past six until he was carved up like a pig an hour later
16	y a todos les	and he
17	Nadie	No one
18	Muchos	Many people
19	Pero la mayoría	But most
20	Yo	I
21	y apenas si	and I only
22	Santiago Nasar se	Santiago Nasar
23	[ ]	It
24	De no haber sido por la llegada del obispo se	If it hadn't been for the bishop's arrival he
25	En el monte	In the country
26	En la época de perdices	During the partridge season
27	En el armario	In the closet

28	Siempre	He always
29	pero antes de abandonar la casa aquel día le	but before leaving the house that day
30	Y la	And he
31	"Nunca la"	"He never
32	me	his mother
33	Yo lo	I
34	Y	and I also
35	[ ]	It
36	Santiago Nasar, que entonces era muy niño,	Santiago Nasar, who was a young child at the time,

3.2 Theme Content in the Spanish Original Text

At first glance, the thematic analysis shows a great variety of ideational themes: human and non-human participants, entities of time and processes. Among human participants are Santiago Nasar (the victim, which is the most frequent thematic element), local people, who include Santiago's mother and the narrator himself; the inanimate group includes the arrival of the bishop, the countryside, a wardrobe, and a gun (referentially). Time entities render the day of Santiago's death, an instant in the morning of his death, the week previous to his death, and the partridge season. Finally, the processes that appear in the theme slot are *despertar, ser* and *abandonar*.

All the ideational elements listed above occur in theme; however, they do not undertake the same interpersonal function. Some of these elements are subjects, mainly the human participants, others are complements rendered as clitic pronouns (Santiago, the narrator, the dreams and the gun) or an indefinite pronoun (*todos*); the rest of the constituents function largely as adjuncts (prepositional phrases) or non-finite dependent clauses. On the other hand, while subjects are overtly thematic in 9 out of 36 sentences, a large proportion of themes are made up of adjuncts or non-finite dependent sentences. This can be taken initially as an indication that in Spanish the default unmarked thematic choice for declarative sentences is a circumstantial adjunct and not the subject. The counterpart translation shows a higher percentage of subjects in thematic position. This is because in Spanish the subject tends to be elided in consecutive sentences when the referent of the elided subject is clear. A suitable solution for the analysis of theme in these cases is to take the elided subject as the theme, as explained earlier. For example, in sentences 1 and 2, reproduced below for ease of reference:

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(1)		levantó a las 5.30 de la mañana para esperar el
	El día en que lo iban a matar, <u>Santiago Nasar</u> se	buque en que llegaba el obispo.
(2)		Había soñado que atravesaba un bosque de higuerones donde caía una lluvia tierna.

(1) On the day they were going to kill him, <u>Santiago Nasar</u> got up at five-thirty in the morning to wait for the boat the bishop was coming on. (2) <u>He</u>'d dreamed he was going through a grove of timber trees where gentle drizzle was falling.

The subject of sentence 1, Santiago Nasar, is the elided subject of sentence 2. The subject theme Santiago Nasar is carried over to sentence 2, which exhibits an empty theme. In fact, having been expressed in the first sentence, the same subject is maintained over a stretch of 5 consecutive sentences. If the elliptical subjects are counted as themes in the text, the total number of subject themes is 34 out of the 36 total. There are cases, however, in which the subject is elided but the theme is not empty, as seen, for example, in 3 and 4:

(3)	Y por un instante	fue feliz en el sueño,
(4)	pero al despertar se	sintió por completo salpicado de cagada de pájaro.

(3) and for an instant he was happy in his dream, (4) but when he awoke he felt completely spattered with bird shit

Sentences 3 and 4 do not exhibit an overtly expressed subject but they have other elements, apart from the textual elements in theme (conjunctions *y* and *pero*): the prepositional phrase *por un instante* and non-finite clause *al despertar*. These are ideational elements, which are participants in the transitivity structure and therefore suited to fill the thematic slot. In the English translation the corresponding personal pronoun subject ('he') appears in theme besides the circumstances. Halliday and Matthisessen (2004) include a category of displaced subject, which follows a marked topical theme; under Ravelli's dynamic perspective the subject is simply included in the theme.

In Spanish, when the subject (unlike in sentence 1) is not overtly expressed, it seems more difficult to justify the inclusion of the subject as part of the theme. In fact, it can be argued that the subject is omitted because it plays no role in the thematic structure. The common subject (whether overtly expressed or omitted) and the conjunctions (*y* and

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pero) clearly indicate continuation; the adjuncts provide time references, which indicate the sequence in which the events take place. Thus, the subject contributes to the building of the message by providing the main participant, whereas the adjuncts provide the frame in which the events unfold; it can be claimed then that it is the adjunct that makes up the thematic structure and not the subject.

The Spanish grammatical system, however, allows for the expression of subjects in the rheme, and it also allows for non-subject sentences in the form of impersonal structures. These choices regarding the expression and placement of the subject indicate that the elided subject needs to be considered necessarily thematic, i.e. the subject is elided from the thematic structure and not from the rheme, in all the cases of empty themes and themes that exhibit other ideational elements. This is the approach taken in the analysis of theme here. A tentative explanation of occurrences of elided subjects and circumstantial elements in theme will be provided in the discussion on thematic progression later in this chapter.

This interpretation means that the overwhelming majority of thematic slots in the text have the subject (overtly expressed or elided) as part of the theme. The only exception to this is represented by projecting sentences, which exhibit the subject in the rheme, as illustrated in section 2.

Subjects are nearly exclusively selected among human participants and are made up of nominal groups or the personal pronoun 'I' (*yo*). Much has been said about the pro-drop of the personal pronoun subjects in Spanish. The extract includes two instances of the first person (*yo*). One reason for its expression is the ambiguity of the verb ending in the imperfect form, since the first and third person of the imperfect tense share the same verb ending. But equally important is the fact that the first person encapsulates not only an ideational but also an interpersonal meaning; in the text, it clearly exhibits interpersonal bearing. It does not occur as part of a dialogue with other character(s) but in the narration; this means that it is intended to help the reader in understanding the identity of the narrator both as a witness and as an interviewer. Once the subject theme has been expressed in the first sentence of the thematic chain, it behaves as the rest of the theme subjects do in that it is elided in the subsequent one.

There are no other personal pronoun subjects in the text but the interpersonal role of first and second person personal pronouns will be discussed in the section on spoken language. It is worth advancing here that the interpersonal charge of the first and second person subject pronouns means that their expression in theme is often granted in order to convey such a meaning. Note that the alternative placement of the subject *yo* in a post-verbal position is also grammatically correct, and is commonly used in Spanish. This arrangement neutralises the interpersonal role.

Another pronoun which occurs in theme is the reflexive pronoun; its expression is mandatory and it occurs regardless of the ellipsis of its lexical referent. This is an argument that has been used in favour of considering reflexives (and clitic pronouns in general) as parts of the verb. As stated earlier, their contribution to the thematic role is arguably less prominent, but they are considered here as part of the theme.

Nominal groups in theme are expanded in two instances:

| (15) | Mas aún: las muchas personas que encontró desde que salió de su casa a las 6.05 hasta que fue destazado como un cerdo una hora después lo | recordaban un poco soñoliento pero de buen humor, |
| (36) | Santiago Nasar, que entonces era muy niño | no olvidó nunca la lección de aquel percance. |

(15) Furthermore: all the many people he ran into after leaving his house at five minutes past six until he was carved up like a pig an hour later remember him as being a little sleepy but in good mood, (36) Santiago Nasar, who was a young child at the time, never forgot the lesson of that accident.

Both expansions involve a relative clause; the realtive clause in 15 makes the noun (*personas*) determined by specifying its referent (the many people he met), while the expansion in 36 serves to connect the re-introduced subject theme to the previous sentence by encoding in the relative clause a chronological perspective, which serves as a bridge between then and now. Thus, it serves to bring the narration from the past of Santiago's childhood to the day of his death. Both expansions have similar function in that they serve to connect the newly introduced subject to the previous sentence; they serve to establish a cohesive link between the two consecutive sentences.

Further participants in thematic position are complements Direct Objects and Indirect Objects (DO and IO), mainly rendered as clitics (*les, le, los, lo, me*), with the exception of the undetermined pronoun *todos,* which occurs together with the

corresponding clitic reduplication *les*. This occurrence is part of a sequence of two sentences:

(15)	Más aún: las muchas personas que encontró desde que salió de su casa a las 6.05 hasta que fue destazado como un cerdo una hora después lo	recordaban un poco soñoliento pero de buen humor,
(16)	y a todos les	comentó de un modo casual que era un día muy hermoso.

(15) Furthermore: all the many people he ran into after leaving his house at five minutes past six until he was carved up like a pig an hour later remember him as being a little sleepy but in good mood, (16) and he remarked to all of them in a casual way that it was a very beautiful day.

In sentence 15 the theme is made up of a textual theme (*más aún*), the subject (*las muchas personas*) expanded by a relative clause and the clitic *lo* (which refers to Santiago). The subject represents a new theme in the text; this is why it is specified by means of the relative restricted clause (whose subject is Santiago) and the clitic *lo*, whose referent is also Santiago. Thus, both the relative clause and the complement connect the new subject to the previous theme. In sentence 16 the theme is made up of the complement (*a todos les*), whose referent is the subject theme of the preceding sentence. Notice also that the referent of the (elided) subject is Santiago Nasar. The occurrence of the clitic (*les*) is obligatory even though a reference of the clitic (*a todos*) is fronted to the clitic. It is worth pointing out how the thematic participants of these two sentences are the same: local people and Santiago Nasar; but in the first sentence of the pair, local people function as subject and Santiago as a complement and in the second sentence the roles are reversed: local people constitute the complement and Santiago Nasar the subject.

In sum, human participants are thematised in all but two sentences. Santiago Nasar is the theme subject in 19 out of the 36 sentences; local people are the subject in 5 out of the 36, the narrator in 4 sentences and the mother in 2. Thus, nearly all themes are human participants functioning as subjects. Complements are restricted to referential clitics.

The second most frequent thematic element is represented by circumstantial adjuncts, which are made up of prepositional phrases: *por un instante, en el monte, en la época de perdices, en el armario*; nominal groups: *el día en que lo iban a matar, la semana anterior*. Both sets of adjuncts render spatial relations of time and place.

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As indicated in section 2, dependent clauses in initial position are considered as part of the theme of the main sentence. They have a similar function to circumstantial adjuncts. This extract contains three cases of dependent sentences in initial position. All three cases are non-finite dependent clauses which are realized by a preposition and an infinitive. The meaning encapsulated in the first two is that of time and the third one renders cause/condition.

Other types of theme are represented by textual and interpersonal elements. Textual themes are made up exclusively of the conjunctions *y* and *pero*.

Interpersonal elements are represented by mood adjuncts, expressing modality: *siempre, nunca, apenas*. All the interpersonal elements belong to the mood category. Mood adjuncts express meanings closely related to the verbal group, namely tense, polarity and modality; this means that it is more difficult for the reader to recognise them as interpersonal elements, so thus the text gives an impression of objectivity.

3.3 Comparison of Theme Content in Spanish and in English

The comparison between the Spanish original and the English counterpart shows that there are two perceptible differences in the choices of theme. The first of these discrepancies is the fact that the subject pronouns, which have been elided in the Spanish original, are expressed in the English translation. The second main difference is the expression of complements (realized as clitic pronouns) in thematic position in Spanish. As regards the first of these differences, the elided subject is considered thematic in the Spanish analysis, thus the expression of the pronominal subjects causes no changes to the theme analysis or interpretation in English. Arguably, the reader of the English translation must retrieve the referent of the personal pronoun from the preceding part of the text (or the context) as much as the reader of the Spanish original must retrieve the referent of the elided subject. Two cases of ellipsis, which require more effort on the part of the reader, are sentences 23 and 35, where the referent of the elided subject is the complement from the previous sentence in one case and the whole content of the previous sentence in the other. The real clue that indicates the referent of the elliptical subject lies

in the rheme. The counterpart English translation contains the dummy pronoun 'it', which provides no better indication of its referent. Thus, both the elliptical subject in Spanish and the pronominal subject in English must be filled up with the appropriate reference provided by the previous part of the text. The fact that there is an exact correspondence between the elliptical subjects and the personal pronoun subject in the Spanish original and the English translation supports the approach taken in this research in favour of the interpretation of elliptical subjects as theme or as part of the thematic structure.

One exception to this similarity involves projecting clauses, which in Spanish show the subject in post-verbal position, whereas in the English translation the subjects appear in the theme; the subject is either lexicalised or expressed as a pronominal reference depending on whether the Spanish original has the subject overtly expressed or as ellipsis. The examples below illustrate subject position in projections in Spanish and in English. The subjects have been underlined.

(5)	"Siempre	soñaba con árboles"
(6)	me	dijo Plácida Linero, su madre, evocando 27 años árboles los pormenores de aquel lunes ingrato.
(7)	"La semana anterior	había soñado que iba sólo en un avión de papel de estaño que volaba sin tropezar entre los almendros",
(8)	me	Dijo
(9)		Tenía una reputación bien ganada de intérprete certera de los sueños ajenos,
(10)	pero	no había advertido ningún augurio aciago en esos dos sueños con árboles que él le había contado en las mañanas que precedieron a su muerte.

(5)	"He	was always dreaming about trees,"
(6)	Plácida Linero, his mother	told me twenty-seven years later, recalling the details of that unpleasant Monday
(7)	"The week before, he'	'd dreamt that he was alone in a tinfoil airplane and flying through the almond trees without bumping into anything,"
(8)	she	told me
(9)	She	had a well-earned reputation as an accurate interpreter of other people's dreams, provided they were told her before eating,
(10)	but she	hadn't noticed any ominous augury in those two dreams of her son's, or in the other dreams of trees he'd told her about on the mornings preceding his death.

This change in the theme can have an effect on the thematic progression pattern. In Spanish the theme of (6) is represented by *me*, which as first person carries an interpersonal meaning and can appear almost at any stage in the text. Moreover, paratactic projecting clauses exhibit the subject after the verb, which enables the insertion

of the new subject (Santiago's mother) in the rheme. In English the new theme appears in thematic position, but it is linked to the previous theme by the possessive (*his*) whose referent is Santiago. Thus, the cohesion is maintained by reference.

As said above, complements (objects) occur rendered as clitic pronouns in theme in the Spanish text. In English, the default position of complements is in the rheme; a lexicalised complement may occur in theme only in highly marked contexts. In the original Spanish text all of the complements are realized as clitic; i.e. their occurrence in the theme is required; the translator has placed the complements in the rheme in English. Since all the occurrences of clitic pronouns appear with thematic subjects (overtly expressed or elided) the thematic progression in both languages is carried out by the subject (with the exception of reporting clauses in Spanish); but while in English the subject is the only element involved in the theme, in Spanish the clitic provides a cohesive link to the preceding sentence. Thus, it is not the thematic pattern that is different in both languages but the fact that the subject (and textual elements) convey cohesion in English, as compared to Spanish where complements also contribute to create cohesive ties.

From this comparison it can be concluded that the differences in the English translated text, which are imposed by the grammatical system, seem to have no effect in the thematic interpretation of the text. In other words, that the thematic content of the Spanish original can be maintained in the English translation to the same thematic effect. This does not imply, however, that a text written originally in English will necessarily make use of the same thematic choices.

3.4 Thematic Interpretation

As explained in the section 2.7, there have been attempts to link a given thematic pattern to genre. Research done in this respect show that texts present different types of patterning according to each of the different stages within the text. Sections dealing with exposition and explanation show a greater number of simple linear themes, whereas parts covering argumentation present more cases of derived themes. Constant theme predominates in descriptive and narrative sections. Expectations as regards the type of

thematic pattern in this extract point towards a higher number of constant theme chains. An analysis of thematic progression also offers an insight into the cohesive links between consecutive sentences: reference, ellipsis, substitution and lexical cohesion.

One way in which themes are connected is by maintaining the same theme over a number of sentences. This is frequently done with the subject, which is typically kept in two or more consecutive sentences. This type of 'constant' theme in Daneš' (1974) terminology forms a thematic chain in which the subject, after the first sentence, tends to be elided in Spanish. In English the sentences of a constant theme chain tend to express the subject referentially by a personal pronoun. The ellipsis in Spanish and the personal pronoun in English indicate the fact that the subject theme continues from the previous sentence(s). Note that both ellipsis and reference are cohesive devices (Halliday and Hasan 1976). A change in the text may be introduced by selecting another element as theme. In order to maintain cohesion, this new theme may come from the rheme of the previous sentence, as a simple linear theme in Daneš' classification patterns. The first of these breaks in the chain of constant theme occurs in sentence 9 (then again in 23 and 35). Sentences 5 and 7 are quotes preceding their corresponding projecting clause. Having expressed the projected clause in initial position, this has the effect of maintaining the theme of the previous sentences: the elided subject (Santiago Nasar). This, in turn, enables the author to introduce a new participant (Santiago's mother) as the sayer in the rheme of the projecting clause. Thus, enabling the new participant (the mother) to become the theme subject of the subsequent sentences, 9 and 10. It is worth noting that in both sentences, 9 and 10, the subject is omitted; the ellipsis is possible because the referent of the elliptical subject has been expressed, also as subject, in the rheme of the previous sentence (6). The relative contiguity (notice that the subject in the second projecting clause (8) is elided also) between the referent and the elided subject ensures that the ellipsis does not affect the readability. Further, the subject of both 6 and 8 is the same; thus, the writer does not feel it needs to be inserted again.

Spanish speakers are used to the subject omission in consecutive sentences, and although these two projections are not consecutive they are close enough and similar enough for the writer to take advantage of this economising device. What is more surprising is the fact that then the subject of the next sentence (9), which constitutes a

change in theme, from Santiago to his mother, is also omitted. A tentative explanation points to the fact that the omitted subject is also the subject in the preceding sentence, (although it is omitted in 8, it was fully expressed in 6). The subject of this new sentence was also the subject (expressed in the rheme) of the preceding sentence. Thus, sentence 8 and 9 form a chain of simple linear themes. But in this type of chain (simple linear pattern) the element taken from the previous sentence may not necessarily be the subject; in fact it is most likely to be a complement. In this case the presupposed element reads a meaning such as 'this', which is glossed as 'it' in English. This is the case in 23. The referent of the elided subject theme is the complement in the preceding rheme (*la camisa y el pantalón*). In 35 the referent of the omitted subject is the content of the previous sentence 'all that', which is a summative type of theme (outside Daneš' patterns). Both themes appear empty and the respective referents can be retrieved from the rheme of previous sentences. In English the pronominal subject ('it') provides a link between the previous and the current sentence, tracing clearly the thematic progression; in Spanish it seems that there is a gap in the thematic thread. The Spanish reader needs to fill the gap left by the omitted subject without the help of a grammatical reference. Nonetheless, the procedure used to make the text advance cohesively (the simple linear pattern) is exactly the same and it has the same effect. This is important because it means that the empty thematic slot, whose elliptical subject refers to an element in the previous sentence (or to the entire preceding sentence) and points towards the rheme, provides the 'link' in the thematic progression; therefore, it is the empty slot that must be considered as theme and not the verb in initial position. It can also be inferred from this that simple linear thematic patterns tend to omit the subject theme in Spanish. This needs to be corroborated with more data.

There are other subject themes that do not correspond to any of the thematic patterns discussed earlier. They cannot be traced back in the previous text because they are not linked to the preceding part of the text. For example, in 15, there is a new theme, *las muchas personas*, which appears for the first time; this change in theme is signalled by a conjunctive adjunct (*más aún*), on the one hand; on the other, the noun head, 'local people', is expanded by means of a relative clause. This serves to connect the new subject theme to the previous thematic element (Santiago Nasar). The expansion enables a

textually new subject to be thematic by connecting it grammatically to the previous theme(s). Thus, part of the theme, the expansion, comes from the previous sentence, which creates a cohesive link to the previous part of the discourse. Then, the new theme 'local people' are maintained as thematic till sentence 17; they are rendered by referential terms such as 'many' and 'majority', which represent part of the original theme by a meronymic relationship. The transition from 'local people' to the new theme *yo* (sentence 20), rendering the narrator, represents a smooth transition since the narrator also belongs to the local community. Moreover, the narrator has already been briefly introduced to the reader as the beneficiary of the predicate in *me dijo* in sentence 6. Further, the first person personal pronoun can, to certain extent, be introduced at any point in the discourse due to its interpersonal bearing. However, the writer skilfully introduces it at an appropriate moment to provide a smooth transition from previous sentences. This is also a resourceful way of informing the reader that he lived in the town when the crime took place.

A further type of theme that does not correspond to any of Daneš' (1974) patterns is represented by textually given themes, which may be reintroduced a few times in the text. McCabe (1999) labels them as 'back' themes. This type of theme can be brought back into play at any time on the basis of their textually old status. This is particularly true in cases of 'key' themes in a given text. This is the case of the central character, Santiago Nasar, who is reintroduced 3 times. In one instance, this is done purely on the basis that the character has already been introduced; in the other two instances, the writer brings him back establishing a connection to the immediate preceding sentence. One way of doing this involves a relative clause, *Santiago, que entonces era un niño*; as seen previously, the relative clause connects the new sentence to the previous one and ensures that there is no gap between the two consecutive sentences. A different device that ensures the connection between the re-introduced subject theme and the previous part of the text is realized by means of an adverbial: *tampoco* and *también*, which have an inclusive referential effect. A further device that ensures the connection between the re-introduced theme subject and the previous sentence is to express referentially (with a clitic pronoun) an element or elements from the previous part of the text: *Yo lo sabía* (33). The expression of the clitic pronoun (*lo*) has the effect of connecting the previous

sentence to the new one, on the one hand, and of making the text progress by changing the subject theme, on the other. It is worth emphasising that both the subject and the complement (the clitic) are placed in the theme. This is important because it has been claimed that preverbal objects in Spanish are so due to their information weight and that they trigger the post-verbal occurrence of subjects; however, it can be seen that although the complement (or the expansion) clearly encodes referential meaning to create the connection to the previous sentence, the subject (whether textually given or new) is still expressed in the theme and not in the rheme, which is also a realization possible in Spanish.

The thematic analysis seems to indicate that constant thematic chains are the most frequent chains, with a strong tendency for human participants functioning as subjects to occur predominantly in thematic position, regardless of information weight. The information status seems to be accounted for in the explicit expression or omission of the subject in consecutive clauses. The subject is also elided in simple linear chains. Most chains are made up of two consecutive sentences, but there are two considerably longer chains, which have Santiago Nasar as their common theme subject.

Circumstantial adjuncts form part of the experiential theme; however, they seem to be outside the thematic patterns in the way that Daneš identifies them. McCabe (1999) considers adverbials of time and space outside the thematic patterns because they are not connected to a previous theme(s) or rheme(s); but she points to the fact that they seem to pose no problems for learners in understanding history texts. She argues that time in history events is a crucial notion, and that time expressions seem to be 'free', 'readily available' to the readers. While time entities refer to real time parameters in history texts, in the extract under analysis here (narrative fiction) expressions of time do not have a real time referent. Thus, the novelist provides a time parameter in the first sentence, which serves as the main reference for the rest of the time units; that is, circumstances of time are expressed in relation to the day of Santiago's death. As such, they are used as readily available outside any of the thematic patterns. But it is important to remark that the thematic progression is carried out mainly by the subject, which is also part of the theme. In addition to circumstances of time, circumstantial adjuncts of place and cause/condition occur in the theme as well.

It is important to explain here two aspects pertinent to circumstantial adjuncts in general but to time-place in particular, which are significant. First of all, circumstances play a role in the transitivity structure, and they can occur in the rheme or in the theme without having a particular marked status. Secondly, the semantic meaning that they encapsulate can be realised differently: for example the time notion in sentence 1 is realised as a nominal group: *(el día en que lo iban a matar)*; notice how this group can easily constitute the subject of a relational process; in 3 the time unit is realised as a prepositional phrase: *por un instante*; in sentence 4, the time referent is encapsulated in a non-finite sentence, *pero al despertar*. This implies that their grammatical realization points to the type of role that they play in the transitivity system as background information more often than as a central role, which is also possible[4]. In Spanish adjuncts can have central roles in the theme by expressing the corresponding subject in the rheme in order to leave the adjunct as the only experiential participant in the theme, as illustrated in section 2. Further, the notions encoded in circumstantial adjuncts can also be expressed by conjunctive adjuncts, which play a textual role outside the transitivity system. Those notions expressed by conjunctive adjuncts can be internal to the text; that is, they express metatextual relations or they can also express external relationships. Modal adjuncts, which do not play a role in the transitivity system either, also express some similar notions; for example, mood adjuncts (modality, polarity and mood) are closer to the notions express by the verb. Indeed, the distinction among the three kinds of adjuncts is not always apparent; Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 279) admit that one element can occur as 'a circumstance and in one of the other functions'; he illustrates this with a temporal entity 'at that moment', which can have any of the three readings (ideational, interpersonal or textual) depending on the context. Further, if we compare Halliday's classification of conjunctive adjuncts and circumstantial adjuncts, there is some clear overlapping in the meanings expressed by some of the subcategories of both types of adjuncts such as manner, spatio-temporal, cause-condition. Thompson (1996: 196) acknowledges the parallel meanings at the different levels: "the various types of relationship that we identify between sentences can also be used to describe relations between many types of linguistic elements which combine into a larger unit".

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[4] Berry (1987) studies the occurrence of place names and their grammatical realizations in guidebooks.

Conjunctions, which do not form part of the sentence structure, also express some of these relational meanings. The implication being that circumstantial adjuncts appear to lie on the intersection between the ideational and the textual function in that they have a dual role: a textual role as adjuncts and an ideational one as circumstances. This duality seems to be corroborated by the fact that circumstantial adjuncts may occur in the theme or in the rheme. This same principle applies to dependent clauses, finite and non-finite, which also encode circumstantial meanings. Fries (1995b) notes that certain types of text may contain more time references than others, but their distribution in the text is not random. He suggests that writers may select certain references of time to appear in theme in order to contribute to the organization of the text.

Events in the outside world take place against two main dimensions: time and space. One way of organising those events in the text is by reproducing the events as they happened in the outside world; that is, by recounting them in the order (spatio-temporal) in which they took place. Thus, the ordering of information in the text can follow a chronological sequencing, for example. This way of presenting the text, as a linguistic image of the reality, is what Enkvist (1991) calls 'isomorphic' texts. The text itself, as a linguistic event, is also sensitive to time and space: one sentence must be arranged before /earlier than another in an orderly and logical manner. Textual markers signal how a particular sentence fits in with the rest of the text; that is, textual material has a metatextual or internal function in organizing the text.

Thus, given that writers need to organise the text somehow, placing circumstantial adjuncts in theme serves not only to provide part of the experiential background content but also to organise the text in a given order. Thus, for example, expressing a circumstantial time adjunct (or dependent clause) in theme is a kind of 'economising' process by which the writer is using real time references (ideational content) to organise the text (textual meaning). Spatial notions are used to the same effect because these are also notions that have the double role as ideational content (where) and as textual organisers (spatial pointers within the text). The advantage derived from using a circumstantial adjunct rather than a conjunctive adjunct as theme is precisely the fact that they accommodate ideational meaning. Enkvist (1991) claims that writers turn the constraints imposed by the text to their advantage.

This may imply that when a circumstantial adjunct occurs in the theme the textual meaning is activated by means of its thematic occurrence, and when the circumstantial adjunct occurs in the rheme the ideational meaning is the only meaning foregrounded. Further, some circumstantial adjuncts seem more suitable to appear in theme, or vice versa. Sentence 1 (reproduced below) contains two adjuncts expressing time; one has been inserted in the theme and the other in the rheme:

> (1) *El día en que lo iban a matar,* Santiago Nasar se levantó *a las 5.30 de la mañana para esperar el buque en que llegaba el obispo.*

Expressions of time are vital pieces of information in this novel, which deals with a crime; however, those references to time placed in the theme not only add details to the circumstances of the crime but also help to piece the text together.

This could also explain why adjuncts often co-appear with the subject in theme. It seems that the more textual their role is the greater the possibilities for another ideational element to occur in theme. Notice that in English, adjuncts in thematic position are frequent and are considered less marked than complements, for example.

Thus, it is also worth examining at which stages in the text the circumstantial elements occur in theme; that is, what is their contribution to the method of development.

3.5 Method of Development

Thematic progression is concerned with the way theme progresses sentence by sentence cohesively. Continuation is achieved by means of inserting the same experiential meaning in the theme of consecutive sentences. These sentences form chains based on shared ideational thematic content, but contiguous sentences may also be linked by other elements outside the transitivity system such as textual and interpersonal elements.

The text as a whole, however, contains relatively few textual and modal elements. The total of textual themes is 12, all of which are conjunctions; *y* (7 instances), *pero* (4 instances) and *más aún* (one). Textual themes represent just over 25 % of the total

themes. Interpersonal themes tally to 4 modal adjuncts: *siempre* (2), *apenas* (1) and *nunca* (1).

The low number of interpersonal themes and the fact that all the interpersonal markers are mood adjuncts attributed mainly to Santiago's mother is relevant because it gives the text a strong sense of objectivity.

Textual elements can be grouped in two categories: continuative *y* and the rest of the conjunctions (*pero, más aún*). The former serves to link two consecutive sentences, which tend to be part of a thematic chain with a shared subject. Two of the second conjunctive category occur in three of five key themes, which stand out significantly in the text. The five themes are reproduced below:

(1)   *El día en que lo iban a matar, Santiago Nasar se*
(15)   *Más aún: las muchas personas que encontró desde que salió de su casa a las 6.05 hasta que fue destazado como un cerdo una hora después lo*
(24)   *De no haber sido por la llegada del obispo se*
(29)   *pero antes de abandonar la casa aquel día le*
(36)   *Santiago Nasar, que entonces era muy niño*

The theme of sentences 15 and 29 exhibit textual markers, while the rest of the themes contain Santiago Nasar, an expression of time and the bishop's arrival in theme. The first of these themes, which corresponds to the first sentence of the novel, is made up of two key participants that play key roles in the extract and in the novel: Santiago and the day of his death. The first theme provides the time frame of the entire novel. The second heavy theme introduces those people who saw Santiago Nasar on the day of his death. They act as informants to the narrator; they are in effect 'witnesses' to the crime. Then, the themes of 24 fronted to the elided subject (Santiago) render cause-condition in that the visit of the bishop altered Santiago's routine; this suggests that this change in his routine led him into meeting his death. The last sentence of the extract shows Santiago explicitly expressed as theme together with a relative clause, which bridges this sentence with the previous ones; in other words, it serves to bring the reader from Santiago's childhood back to the morning of his death, where the novel started. It serves to close this first part.

These themes are particularly significant to the narration of the development of events. It is unusual that we have been told in the first sentence what happened; usually

we need to read the book to find this out. What the novel provides the reader with is the account of how it happened. This is done by piecing together details, which are collected from different informants. It is not surprising then that time, location, and informants are key participants placed in the theme. They provide the frame for the story to unfold. Time in particular is paramount since the sequence of events will allow the narrator to piece together the events surrounding the crime, but it will also allow the writer to tell the story. In other words, time parameters are foregrounded as vital information in the events but also as textual frames in which to anchor the text itself. Further, circumstantial themes gravitate predominantly in sentences belonging to the two long chains of constant theme. It was said before that thematic patterns account for the way in which the text progresses; yet, strictly speaking constant themes do not make the text advance in that each sentence in the chain is concerned with the same participant. The expression of circumstantial elements in those constant theme chains makes the subject theme 'move' forward either in time or any other dimension (circumstance). It is important to stress here that it is the subject, despite the fact that it may be elided, and not the adjunct that provides the common thread that forms the constant theme chain; consequently, the elided subject must be considered part of the theme together with the adjunct. The adjuncts provide ideational information (i.e. make the story advance) at the same time as they serve as textual anchors for the sentences in which they occur.

The low number of textual markers seems to run parallel to the high number of circumstantial adjuncts in theme (mainly time, followed by location and cause-condition). The use of textual (logical relations such as cause, concession, consequence) markers may indicate that the writer interprets the events; but by presenting the events as an isomorphic image of the real world, this suggests that the writer does not interfere in the content presented. This interpretation is also congruent with the low level of interpersonal elements.

3.6 Conclusions

The theme analysis of the Spanish original illustrates that subjects are thematic in all sentences with the exception of projecting clauses and subjects are represented mainly by human participants (in 34 out of the 36 sentences). This confirms a clear tendency to express subjects in theme. In contiguous sentences of constant theme the subject is omitted after the first sentence and other elements may occur in theme; these elements tend to be conjunctions (*y* and *pero* predominantly); and, in longer chains circumstantial adjuncts also occur in theme and serve an orienting function for the information expressed in the sentence (textual) as well as ensuring progression. Complements in theme are restricted exclusively to referential clitic pronouns and tend to occur together with the subject.

Constant theme is the most recurring thematic pattern, made of two consecutive sentences; but there are three longer chains: two, which exhibit a constant theme, and one chain of derived theme. The two longer chains of constant theme exhibit circumstantial adjuncts in theme as well as the subject. Circumstantial adjuncts play a role closer to textual themes in that they contribute to the organization of the text in a way that the subject cannot, by providing a spatial and causal frame for the subject to move forward. The least represented pattern is the simple linear theme, which occurs only three times; in all the occurrences it shows the omission of the subject, which is the element taken from the previous rheme. Themes that fall outside the thematic pattern tend to be introduced as multiple or heavy themes with expansions which serve to establish a link to the preceding part of the text. There are two instances in which the key theme (Santiago Nasar) is reintroduced without any cohesive device.

Differences between the Spanish theme content and the English translation occur in themes in which the subject was elided in the Spanish original. The ellipsis in the Spanish theme corresponds to a personal pronoun subject in English. A further difference was noted in projecting clauses, which exhibit post-verbal subject in Spanish. The English counterpart expresses the subject in preverbal position.

Extract from *Crónica de una muerte anunciada,* pp. 3-9 (Cron.SP2)

(1) El día en que lo iban a matar, Santiago Nasar se levantó a las 5.30 de la mañana para esperar el buque en que llegaba el obispo. (2) Había soñado que atravesaba un bosque de higuerones donde caía una lluvia tierna. (3) Y por un instante fue feliz en el sueño, (4) pero al despertar se sintió por completo salpicado de cagada de pájaro. (5) "Siempre soñaba con árboles" (6) me dijo Plácida Linero, su madre, evocando 27 años después los pormenores de aquel lunes ingrato. (7) "La semana anterior había soñado que iba sólo en un avión de papel de estaño que volaba sin tropezar entre los almendros", (8) me dijo. (9) Tenía una reputación bien ganada de intérprete certera de los sueños ajenos, siempre que se los contaran en ayunas, (10) pero no había advertido ningún augurio aciago en esos dos sueños con árboles que él le había contado en las mañanas que precedieron a su muerte.

(11) Tampoco Santiago Nasar reconoció el presagio. (12) Había dormido poco y mal, sin quitarse la ropa (13) y despertó con dolor de cabeza y con un sedimento de estribo de cobre en el paladar, (14) y los interpretó como estragos naturales de la parranda de bodas que se había prolongado hasta después de la media noche. (15) Más aún: las muchas personas que encontró desde que salió de su casa a las 6.05 hasta que fue destazado como un cerdo una hora después, lo recordaban un poco soñoliento pero de buen humor, (16) y a todos les comentó de un modo casual que era un día muy hermoso. (17) Nadie estaba seguro de si se refería al estado del tiempo. (18) Muchos coincidían en el recuerdo de que era una mañana radiante con una brisa de mar que llegaba a través de los platanales, como era de pensar que lo fuera en un buen febrero de aquella época. (19) Pero la mayoría estaba de acuerdo en que era un tiempo fúnebre, con un cielo turbio y bajo y un denso olor de aguas dormidas, y que en el instante de la desgracia estaba cayendo una llovizna menuda como la que había visto Santiago Nasar en el bosque del sueno. (20) Yo estaba reponiéndome de la parranda de la boda en el regazo apostólico de María Alejandrina Cervantes, (21) y apenas si desperté con el alboroto de las campanas tocando a rebato, porque pensé que las habían soltado en honor del obispo.

(22) Santiago Nasar se puso un pantalón y una camisa de lino blanco, ambas piezas sin almidón, iguales a las que se había puesto el día anterior para la boda. (23) Era un atuendo de ocasión. (24) De no haber sido por la llegada del obispo se habría puesto el vestido caqui y las botas de montar con que iba los lunes a El Divino Rostro, la hacienda de ganado que heredó de su padre, y que el administraba con muy buen juicio aunque sin mucha fortuna. (25) En el monte llevaba al cinto una 357 Magnum, cuyas balas blindadas, según él decía, podían partir un caballo por la cintura. (26) En la época de perdices llevaba también sus aperos de cetrería. (27) En el armario tenía además un rifle 30.06 Malincher Schonauer, un rifle 300 Holland Mágnum, un 22 Hornet con mira telescópica de dos poderes y una Winchester de repetición. (28) Siempre dormía como durmió su padre, con el arma escondida dentro de la funda de la almohada, (29) pero antes de abandonar la casa aquel día le sacó los proyectiles (30) y la puso en la gaveta de la mesa de noche. (31) "Nunca la dejaba cargada", (32) me dijo su madre. (33) Yo lo sabía, (34) y sabía además que guardaba las armas en un lugar y escondía la munición en otro lugar muy apartado, de modo que nadie cediera ni por casualidad a la tentación de cargarlas dentro de la casa. (35) Era una costumbre sabia impuesta por su padre desde una mañana en que una sirvienta sacudió la almohada para quitarle la funda, y la pistola se disparó al chocar contra el suelo, y la bala desbarató el armario del cuarto, atravesó la pared de la sala, pasó con un estruendo de guerra por el comedor de la casa vecina y convirtió en polvo de yeso a un santo de tamaño natural en el altar mayor de la iglesia, al otro extremo de la plaza. (36) Santiago Nasar, que entonces era muy niño, no olvidó nunca la lección de aquel percance.

Extract from *Chronicle of a death foretold*, pp.1-4. (Chron. EN2)

(1) On the day they were going to kill him, Santiago Nasar got up at five-thirty in the morning to wait for the boat the bishop was coming on. (2) He'd dreamed he was going through a grove of timber trees where gentle drizzle was falling, (3) and for an instant he was happy in his dream, (4) but when he awoke he felt completely spattered with bird shit. (5) "He was always dreaming about trees," (6) Plácida Linero, his mother, told me twenty-seven years later, recalling the details of that unpleasant Monday. (7) "The week before, he'd dreamt that he was alone in a tinfoil airplane and flying through the almond trees without bumping into anything," (8) she told me. (9) She had a well-earned reputation as an accurate interpreter of other people's dreams, provided they were told her before eating, (10) but she hadn't noticed any ominous augury in those two dreams of her son's, or in the other dreams of trees he'd told her about on the mornings preceding his death.

(11) Nor did Santiago Nasar recognize the omen. (12) He had slept little and poorly, without getting undressed, (13) and he woke up with a headache and a sediment of copper stirrup on his palate, (14) and he interpreted them as the natural havoc of the wedding revels that had gone on until after midnight. (15) Furthermore: all the many people he ran into after leaving his house at five minutes past six until he was carved up like a pig an hour later remember him as being a little sleepy but in good mood, (16) and he remarked to all of them in a casual way that it was a very beautiful day. (17) No one was certain if he was referring to the state of the weather. (18) Many people coincided in recalling that it was a radiant morning with a sea breeze coming in through the banana groves, as was to be expected in a fine February of that period. (19) But most agreed that the weather was funereal, with cloudy, low sky and the thick smell of still waters, and that at the moment of the misfortune a thin drizzle like the one Santiago Nasar had seen in his dream grove was falling. (20) I was recovering from the wedding revels in the apostolic lap of María Alejandrina Cervantes, (21) and I only awakened with the clamor of the alarm bells, thinking they had turned them loose in honor of the bishop.

(22) Santiago Nasar put on shirt and pants of white linen, both items unstarched, just like the ones he'd put on the day before for the wedding. (23) It was his attire for special occasions. (24) If it hadn't been for the bishop's arrival, he would have put on his khaki outfit and the riding boots he wore on Mondays to go to The Divine Face, the cattle ranch he'd inherited from his father and which he administrated with very good judgment but without much luck. (25) In the country he wore a magnum .357 on his belt and its armored bullets, according to what he said, could cut a horse in two through the middle. (26) During the partridge season he would also carry his falconry equipment. (27) In the closet he also kept a Malincher Schonauer 30.06 rifle, a Holland magnum 300 rifle, a Hornet .22 with a double-strength telescopic sight, and a Winchester repeater. (28) He always slept the way his father had slept, with the weapon hidden in the pillowcase, (29) but before leaving the house that day he took out the bullets (30) and put them in the drawer of the night table. (31) "He never left it loaded," (32) his mother told me. (33) I knew that, (34) and I also knew that he kept his guns in one place and hid the ammunition in another far removed so that nobody, not even casually, would yield to the temptation of loading them inside the house. (35) It was a wise custom established by his father ever since one morning when a servant girl had shaken the case to get the pillow out and the pistol went off as it hit the floor and the bullet wrecked the cupboard in the room, went through the living room wall, passed through the dining room of the house next door with the thunder of war, and turned a life-size saint on the main altar of the church on the opposite side of the square to plaster dust. (36) Santiago Nasar, who was a young child at the time, never forgot the lesson of that accident.

4. Word Order in Spanish

Word order in Spanish has repeatedly been characterised as being 'free' or 'flexible' compared to other languages such as English or French. This accepted flexibility mainly concerns the placement of the subject, the adverb and the adjective; to these Bolinger (1991: 218) adds the placement of coordinate clauses with respect to one another and the position of dependent clauses in relation to the dominant one. Butt and Benjamin (1994) devote an entire chapter to word order issues. They enumerate a list of clause contexts in which VS order is common including questions, exclamations, and those containing adverbs and adverbial phrases in initial position; a subject noun phrase containing a relative clause also favours VS arrangement. A further criterion mentioned as favouring VS word order is the length of the subject. In cases where the environment of the clause fails to explain word order realizations they offer three possibilities of occurrence: most important information comes first, there is a choice between the two alternative arrangements or in neutral (non focalised) statements the preferred arrangement is SVO.

Some of these claims are evident in real occurring data but not all of them are. For example, a noun group functioning as subject and containing a relative clause can occur in preverbal position. The principle that the most important element comes first is difficult to corroborate in real data. The example used to illustrate this point is *Miguel está leyendo*. This is taken as to be the possible reply to a question such as 'what's Miguel doing?' *¿Qué está haciendo Miguel?* The reply to such a question will most likely be '*está leyendo*' (rather than '*Miguel está leyendo*') without undermining the importance of Miguel. Speakers tend to omit information that is presupposed (Bolinger 1991; Halliday 1994).

Butt and Benjamin illustrate each of the cases of word order realization with isolated examples, although admitting the difficulty that this has when aspects which extend beyond the grammatical sentence are relevant. Indeed, various linguists have noted that word order variations are controlled by features that are pertinent at levels above the clause, such as information and discourse factors, and that variations are not

interchangeable: Bolinger 1954, 1991; Contreras 1976; Hatcher 1956; Teskey 1976; S.A. Thompson 1978; Silva-Corvalán 1983; Ocampo 1990; Mendieta and Molina 1997.

The information factor is undoubtedly the factor most often adduced in considering word order in Spanish. Thus, the relationship between the syntax and the information system is considered in order to explain word order realizations. For Cassielles-Suárez (2003) the tension between the syntactic structure and the information structure can be resolved by means of different strategies, namely 'left dislocation', 'intonation', the use of 'passive voice' and 'focus preposing'. The information structure overrules the syntactic structure in left dislocations; that is, when an element that does not coincide with the subject and constitutes the prominent topic is dislocated from its usual place in the syntactic structure to fronting position, for example: *Esa película no la he visto* (2003: 6). Almost any phrase can be dislocated in Spanish and more than one phrase can be dislocated in a given sentence: *De la conferencia no he oído nada* (ibid). Both Casielles-Suárez (2003) and Silva-Corvalán (1983) agree in that left dislocations respond to information structure pressure with old/older elements appearing earlier in the sentence. Silva-Corvalán, however, emphasises that left dislocated elements are possible because Spanish allows speakers to give pitch prominence to initial elements. Casielles-Suárez does not mention accented dislocated elements, but in cases where more than one element is dislocated, she argues that the accented element needs to be identified. Nonetheless, Silva-Corvalán states that deaccented old objects can be placed preverbally serving as a discourse link. For Casielles-Suárez, left dislocations favour placement of focal subjects in post-verbal position, even when there are no 'topical' dislocated elements in initial position (*Ha llamado Juan*, 2003: 8). Although the examples provided are artificially created and deprived of a context to corroborate the theory, there seems to be a consensus among scholars in agreeing that subjects conveying new information are usually expressed in post-verbal position in Spanish. Indeed, she points out that a perceptible difference between Spanish and English is precisely that Subjects carrying new information are expressed in a post-verbal position in Spanish while in English they are expressed in initial position. On the other hand, she claims that intonation can mark a subject as new in preverbal position in Spanish. This hypothesis is supported, or rather unsupported, with artificially created examples (*'TU HERMANA limpió la casa'*, 2003: 9).

In order to conclude that accented new subjects can appear in a preverbal position in Spanish, it is necessary to find data, to be able to corroborate this claim. But equally important, it is also necessary to explain in which contexts a subject carrying new information appears preverbally and in which contexts it is placed post-verbally. She continues with passive voice, which ensures that the syntactic structure accommodates the information structure. It is important then to explain the context of occurrences for passive constructions in comparison with other alternative choices of ordering. A final resort that enables, according to Cassielles-Suárez, the collaboration between the two structures is focus preposing. There are three differences between focus preposing and left dislocations: focus preposing allows the fronting of only one element, it lacks a re-occurring clitic, and it triggers subject inversion. Silva-Corvalán (1983) adds that the pragmatic function of focus preposing is to indicate either 'contrary to expectation' or 'focus', and it receives the main accent, while the rest of the sentence is deaccented. The examples below, provided by Silva-Corvalán, illustrate a) left-dislocations and b) focus preposing: *uno* is the focal element and receives focal intonation.

a) *-porque esa monja la adorábamos*

b) *-¿Cuántos cigarrillos quería?*
-Uno no mas quería

In left-dislocations the dislocated element is the topic or an important entity in the discourse: it co-occur with a clitic. The context or factors that lead speakers to choose one arrangement over another are not explained: that is, when to place the focus in initial position and when to place it in post-verbal position.

Zubizarreta (1999) takes a similar approach than Cassielles-Suárez in that she distinguishes between 'hanging topic' (*tema vinculate*) and 'left dislocations' on the one hand and preposed focus on the other. Castillo (2002) takes a step further in that she claims that in VS constructions the verb has undergone a topicalization process. While these two authors represent an increasing interest in an aspect that has traditionally been omitted in Spanish Grammars and in studies published in Spain, their claims are illustrated with artificially created examples.

One of the most recent contributions to the word order discussion is that of López Meirama (2006), who reviews several criteria previously used in the study of word order variations to justify the use of the Functional Framework as a suitable model to explore word order issues. She begins from the fact that variations from the prototypical SVO order are pragmatically motivated in Spanish. Given that formal factors do not show variation in meaning, her account of word order consequently focuses on semantic and discourse pragmatic factors. She recognises the complexity of the subject matter and limits her research to basic sentences (monotransitive and intransitive monoargumental structures) and to what she calls word order 'alterations', understanding alterations as deviations from the SVO/SV order. She examines semantic factors[5] adduced as relevant to word order distributions and argues against claims which advocate that a given verb type corresponds to a given word order and vice versa. Her data indicate that both preverbal and post-verbal placements are possible with each type; moreover, some polysemic verbs belong to more than one category. This makes it difficult to anticipate the placement of a constituent based on the semantic value of the verb. As for the definiteness of the subject, her data show that 85% of SV constructions contain a high degree of definiteness and 90% of VS are found at the lower end of the hierarchy of definiteness. Similar findings are revealed in the data examined by Silva-Corvalán (1983) with respect to direct and indirect objects, where a correlation between the semantics of the object and its placement in the sentence was found. However, examples where that correlation is not observed are also frequently found. In other words, determined subjects appear in post-verbal position and indefinite subjects can appear in preverbal position. This again leads López Meirama to the conclusion that the correlation between the definiteness of the subject and its placement in the sentence is a case of tendencies rather than rules.

The second criterion considered as decisive in placement is the thematic structure; this is explored in the light of the pragmatic values, which have been associated with initial position, such as discourse cohesion, information factors and emphasis. The fact that all these pragmatic functions can be achieved by means other than initial position

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[5] For a fuller account on word order and semantic factors see Gawelko (1992)

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placement makes it difficult to conflate theme with these features; thus, López Meirama concludes that theme must be understood in the sense of 'aboutness' and that aboutness is realised by the subject. She claims that not all clauses in Spanish are thematic nor do they respond to thematic structure, because of pro-drop movement (subject deletion) and because of subject inversion. Other elements besides the subject, however, can be thematic; thus she names a list of marked cases where the thematised element is not the subject and where word order realizations are motivated by thematic pressure (topic pressure). Further, López Meirama associates emphasis and focus in that the element that receives prosodic emphasis is the focus; she claims that prosodic prominence alone is not sufficient to mark the focus. Marked word order realizations serve to signal the focus in that in OV and VS constructions the O and the S receive focus. Conversely, in OVS constructions the O and S receive contrasted focus. Although her approach is based upon functional framework there is a crucial aspect that requires clarification. As explained in section 2, theme and topic are two different categories and topic is not necessarily expressed at clause level. López Meirama (2006) conflates topic, theme and subject. This means that word order realizations are in fact explained in terms of syntactic realizations. Thus we end up at the same point that we started, in that the arrangement of the syntactic constituents in the clause is evidence of the word order variation as a language reality in Spanish. Considering SVO as the unmarked order and any other combination as the marked one explains neither in which context nor to what purpose language users may choose one arrangement over another.

Thematic structure has been used previously in the study of word order in Spanish. The first comprehensive study was that of Contreras (1976), *A Theory of Word Order with Special Reference to Spanish*. Drawing from the Prague School tradition he includes the notions of theme/rheme and intonation as factors controlling possible word order occurrences in Spanish. Previously Bolinger (1954) and Hatcher (1956) had included prosodic factors in their studies of word order but failed, according to Contreras, to establish a set of rules to account for word order variations. Contreras attempts to establish such rules. His study, however, is based on isolated and artificially created examples making it difficult to corroborate the exact full meaning of a given utterance. Moreover, he includes a list of 'special' cases, such as idiomatic expressions, passive

constructions, sentences with preventative verbs and negative statements, which are explained simply as an alteration of the rhematic hierarchy. Nonetheless, his pioneering work has inspired subsequent research undertaken in this field. More recent studies of word order variations take into consideration semantic factors and intonation patterns as aspects, which affect word order realizations. Consequently, attention has turned to spoken language and particularly to distributions that show post-verbal subjects and preverbal objects; this is due partly to the fact that those cases are taken to be deviations from the prototypical SVO order; and partly because spoken data appear to exhibit more occurrences of OV/VS.

Silva-Corvalán (1983) studies objects (Os) in Spanish in preverbal position establishing a correlation between intonation, pragmatic and information factors. Os in preverbal position, containing old information and first accent (first stress), indicate centre of attention; that is, a) focus of contrast, b) topic or c) important entity in the discourse. Non-accented old Os in preverbal position function as a discourse link; Os (old and new) in preverbal position with intonation prominence express a meaning which is contrary to expectation; Os carrying new information in preverbal position and a "focal contour" intonation pattern are the focus of the utterance.

Thus, according to Silva-Corvalán (1983), objects carrying old or new information may occur in preverbal position; this syntactic ordering conveys different pragmatic meaning depending on prosodic factors. Two aspects remain unexplained: the context of occurrence of post-verbal objects and the occurrences of objects in written texts, which contain no prosodic features. This study is centred on Os in preverbal position; she claims that the same principles underlined for Os' occurrences in preverbal position apply to subjects. Thus subjects, when expressed in Spanish, can take either a preverbal or post-verbal position; subjects conveying old information are expressed in the form of verb ending (in the same way as Os are expressed in the form of a clitic pronoun); old subjects accented and placed in a preverbal position express topic or focus of contrast; if they are deaccented they function as a discourse link. Subjects conveying new information are expressed in a post-verbal position; this claim is restricted to existential verbs only.

Ocampo (1990) continues and extends this line of research, applying it to subject placement in what he calls 'one valency' and 'two valency' verbs. He also finds that information factors, pragmatic factors and verb type affect word order realizations. Ocampo argues that textually given subjects of 'non-state' verbs and of 'two-valency' verbs take a post-verbal position when the utterance is expressing a meaning 'contrary to expectation', for example: in *se acabó el audiovisual* ('*the* audiovisual is over'), where *el audiovisual* has been mentioned previously. The same pragmatic function is realized in preverbal position in the case of what he calls 'state' verbs (existential verbs); for example, in *la carpa está* ('the tent is here'). Thus the semantics of the verb in these utterances is a decisive factor in the placement of the subjects. A clause such as '*las puertas no cierran*' expresses a meaning of 'contrary to expectation' on the basis that *las puertas* is understood as new information. The information value is then the decisive factor in controlling the arrangement.

As said earlier, information value is a factor most frequently associated with word order in Spanish, in that old comes before new. However, the application of this principle, as illustrated in section 2, results in serious problems.

Following Prince (1981), Ocampo ranks information from situationally evoked to brand new. Prince's taxonomy is based on a range of different degrees of given, which she calls 'assumed familiarity'; the degree of familiarity ranges from brand new, brand new anchored, unused, inferable (containing inferable elements and non containing inferable elements), textually evoked and situationally evoked. Ocampo (1990: 88) sets the boundary between old and new in the textually evoked elements: "those entities introduced into the discourse for the first time". The problems arising from the application that Ocampo (1990: 97) makes of Prince's taxonomy can be seen, for example, in one of the dialogues from his data:

V: a mi mamá
F: le han afanado el auto de la puerta de mi casa
F: ¿qué hice con el (...)?
V: mas o menos cuatro o cinco veces
F:?si?
V: si (...) este que esta ahi, ese Renault 4 que esta ahí que (se
F: ah
V: yo) bua. Resulta que ( ) no sé que deber ser muy fácil de de: de prender, no? de: ( ) de hacerlo:- funcionar porque – aparte las puertas no cierran (the doors do not lock)

This utterance is used to illustrate how, when the NP is new (introduced for the first time according to Prince's taxonomy) and the pragmatic value is contrary to expectation, the word order is SV. The context is that of a girl explaining how her mother's car has been stolen several times while it was parked outside her home. She is explaining how it must be easy to start that particular model (without keys) and she finishes with *aparte las puertas no cierran* (besides, the doors do not lock). The doors can be easily inferred from the car in that context, since they are not only a main part of a car (meronymic relationship) but also a part of the car that has to do with its security. In addition, the fact that *'aparte'* (besides) initiates the sentence is a good indication of the fact that this utterance continues with the list of reasons given as possible explanations of why the car has been stolen several times. This continuity is also shown in the use of the definite article *'las puertas'* (the doors) in that the doors can only be understood as 'the doors of the car'. The second part of the noun group (of the car) is omitted on the basis that the meronymic relationship between the car and the doors is presumed to be obvious to the addressee. This is further evidence in support of an interpretation of 'doors' as intended to be given information. In fact, what can be understood as contrary to expectation, if one must, is the fact that the doors do not lock; in that the main function of any doors is to close so that they can be locked. Consequently, it seems more feasible to read the doors, conveying inferable information, as presented intentionally as given information, compared to the process 'do not lock'.

As explained previously, old and new are controlled by the speaker/writer. The intention of the speaker is generally reflected in other features present in the communication process such as syntax and lexis. The reading of a given constituent must be done in the light of all these factors. On the other hand, the eventual understanding of the message depends entirely on the listener/reader's expectation and socio-cultural background; thus, each individual (including language analysts) may interpret an item as belonging to a different point in the scale of givenness. On this account, it is vital that given is understood as intended as given by the speaker, on the evidence provided by lexico-grammatical features. Thus, in the examples of 'the doors', considering new an inferable element runs against the indications of the rest of the co-text; it can be argued that the doors are textually new in that they have not been mentioned before, but they are

presented as inferable information (made determinate by a definite article) in thematic position. Placing the boundary between old and new after 'evoked items' not only misses the point of the intention of the speaker/writer but it also fails to understand given and new as a continuum value which must be read in relation to the rest of the constituents in the unfolding of the discourse.

Moreover, Ocampo's (1990) interpretation of the utterance as contrary to expectation is based on two parameters: information (the reading of doors as new information) and on placement (in preverbal position). The same pragmatic function is realised post verbally when the subject is given (understanding given as textually given); for example in *se acabó el audivisual*. Thus, the pragmatic value is determined by the interpretation of the information status of the subject; a different interpretation of the information status of the subject will imply a different reading of the pragmatic value. Conversely, a different placement will result in a different pragmatic value. Notice, however, that the alternative alignment (*no cierran las puertas*) can be interpreted in Spanish as '[they] do not lock the doors', understanding doors as the object of the verb, and the subject (they) as the referent of the owners or the users of the car. Thus, it seems that the alternative placement available requires a *se* passive-structure: *no se cierran las puertas*.

Further, in the category of 'two-valency' verbs the information value plays no role in the placement of the elements; but it is claimed that this verb type takes no brand new or brand new anchored tokens. As will be shown in the analysis of the sample texts in the next section, textually new subjects occur in theme with these verbs.

The property of givenness as a continuum is captured in the taxonomy proposed by Prince (1981). For example, the category 'brand new anchored' is labelled as textually new on the basis that it has not been mentioned previously; the anchor serves to provide a reference that enables the addressee to establish the referent of the item. In other words, the speaker anticipates the difficulties the addressee may have in identifying the entity and provides clue(s) to assist him or her to decode the meaning. The inferable items, on the other hand, may be presented as given in that the speaker is confident that the addressee can infer the referent of the given item. Silva-Corvalán (1983) also postulates that old versus new must be considered as a range of more or less given. Note that this

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concept stems from the notion of communicative dynamism proposed by Firbas, which is not comparable to theme and rheme under the systemic approach.

Yang, McDonald, and Musheng (1995) clarify this difference:

the difference between the combining and the separating approach to the definition of theme is that while the combiners either ignore the contribution of word order or treat it as contributing to the same concept of given-new distinction [...] separators tease out and separate the contributions of word order and of the distinction between given and new information, and they use the term theme to indicate the meaning of initial position in the clause.

It is important to note that the three parameters used in Ocampo's explanation of word order are all relative to each other; therefore, the interpretation of any of the values will change the interpretation of the others. The reservations that interpreting and using old and new information in this way create can be seen even more clearly in another example provided by Ocampo (1990: 99)

T: es ese tiempo decían que las palomas traían mala suerte
A: ¿sí?
E: sí
F: ¿dicen así?
E: antes...
T: en ese tiempo era. Te estoy hablando de –tiempo que –era-era
[...]
A: no no no, pero, son supersticiones que podía conocer
T: era Mitre presidente.
E: no, pero siguen las supersticiones
[ ]
E: sí, las supersticiones siguen.

In this utterance the same textually given element appears both in preverbal and in post verbal position: *pero siguen las supersticiones* (VS); *sí, las supersticiones siguen* (SV). According to Ocampo (1990), *seguir* belongs to the 'one-valency non-state' verb class; in this category the subject is placed preverbally to maintain the linear arrangement of information structure (given+new): *sí, las supersticiones siguen*. In the same context, the same subject appears (twice) before post-verbally, in *pero siguen las supersticiones*. This variation in word order is explained as having the pragmatic function of 'contrary to expectation'. The use of pragmatic factors such as 'contrary to expectation', 'important entity', and so on as determining factors in word order arrangement is imprecise because it is difficult to infer those pragmatic meanings since individuals have different sets of

values, culture conditioning, experience and in general a different understanding of the world. In fact, Ocampo acknowledges the problems arising in trying to explain all the occurrences of word order variations with these criteria.

This brief review of work done in the field of word order in Spanish reveals some of the difficulties and significant drawbacks derived from the type of criteria and the methods employed by researchers in attempting to come up with a theory to explain word order realizations.

Research also indicates that the realization that pragmatic aspects intervene in word arrangement has resulted in the gradual inclusion of real occurring texts (although isolated and invented examples are still quoted often in the literature) as the unit of analysis. This shift has resulted in other problems such as the difficulty in explaining real occurring data according to the 'postulated rules'. This seems to reflect the fact that several factors intervene and motivate word order variations. However, when more than one criterion is used in connection with word order, one criterion can overrule another; for example, the verb type and the definiteness of the subject often overrule one another. Thus, it becomes essential to establish a ranking order of factors affecting word order distribution. Further, different factors are quoted simultaneously to explain word order realizations, in which case it is virtually impossible to be able to obtain a comprehensive description of language users' motivations in choosing one particular word order over another. This complexity has led analysts to restrict studies to specific cases of word order variation (syntactic categories, for example); this restriction extends to clause length and clause modality.

In order to obtain a clear understanding of the variations and the motivating factors we must apply either the same criterion to all the word order variations or try different criteria to a single word order realization.

Moreover, the type of criteria to be used to examine word order alignment must be carefully selected in order to ensure that it is fit for purpose. Consider, for example, semantic values such as types of verb or definiteness of the subject. These parameters can offer only a partial account of word order variations because the actual meaning of a particular lexical item is shaped by the context in which it is used. What collaborates in the creation of meaning is not only the intrinsic meaning of an item but also the rest of

the constituents present in the co-text and in the context in which the utterance is being produced. Thus, it is difficult to anticipate the placement of an item outside its linguistic and extra-linguistic environment. The role of the context in the construal of meaning has been noted by Klein-Andreu (1983), for example, in her studies of adjective placement in Spanish. The apparent correlation between semantic features and word order distributions can be explained on the grounds that the intrinsic meaning renders an item a more suitable candidate for a particular placement, thus showing a higher frequency of appearance in a particular position within the sentence.

A further verb that has attracted enormous attention is *gustar* because of its frequent OVS distribution. Occurrences of both preverbal and post-verbal subjects are found in texts. As regard definiteness, again both realizations are possible; data reveal sufficient cases of what can be identified as definite subjects in post-verbal position: *cuando muere Franco* (transcript 3.13) and *y vino ese escritor* (trascript.2.14) Moreover, an indefinite element may be defined by postmodifiers within the preverbal slot prior to the expression of the verb. For example,

> *Una de las más rigurosas limitaciones de muchas de estas contribuciones es el aislamiento de los informantes individuales en el contexto de la entrevista.* (SP1. 22)

The noun group *Una de las más rigurosas limitaciones* appears with the indefinite article *una*, which is an indication of its indefiniteness, but the noun becomes definite by means of the prepositional phrase *de muchas de estas contribuciones*. Notice that the use of the deictic *estas* makes an explicit anaphoric reference to the publications previously mentioned. Thus, the degree of definiteness has to be identified in the text in which each element is uttered; it has to be measured against the rest of the elements in the textual and contextual environment where the utterance is produced. The implication being that the semantic properties alone do not predict the placement of the subject. Preverbal and post-verbal realizations occur for each of the postulated cases. This extends to each of the criteria that have attracted the attention of researchers in connection with word order, including information and pragmatic values.

These two values share two significant characteristics. First, they are dynamic in that they are shaped by the interweaving of each of the elements that interact in a given utterance. Second, they are both detached from position. The dynamism is what enables

speakers to generate infinite types of messages. This creative potential is ironically what makes the work of the language analysts more complex. Yet most speakers use only a limited range of language from the potential available, and their use involves a great deal of repetition in that "much language use is routine" (Stubbs, 1993: 2). This suggests that if large amount of data are examined, patterns of usage will emerge. Although this type of quantitative research is interesting in its own right, it does not explain, for example, word order variations.

It seems that if information and pragmatic factors were to be tested in a large corpus, results would probably indicate some strong tendencies, as is the case in research done in this respect with regard to the definiteness of the subject. Yet research undertaken to date has provided a fragmentary account of word order variation. This is so because these factors are indeed features that contribute to the meaning and the wording of the clause, but they are values not attached to a given position in the clause. For this simple reason, they are unsuitable as parameters to consider word order. The complexity involved in discerning one particular feature from the language system stems from the fact that meaning is created by an intricate networking of the different components of the system. However, all the components will work closely together in the creation of meaning. As illustrated above in respect of givenness, lexical and grammatical features must support one another. That is, form and meaning are two parts of the same system rather than two separate systems.

The systemic model advocates the inseparability of form and meaning, which is represented in the three metafunctions: Interpersonal, Experiential and Textual. They "reflect this three-strand approach" (Thompson (2004: 30) of functional grammar, which is based on a system of choice; "each component has its own systems of choice" (31).

The fact that selections from the language potential "are made as the potential is realised in a particular text" (Stubbs, 1993: 12) has immediate consequences; a) the practical impossibility of predicting a particular realization outside a real occurring context, b) each context of occurrence will favour different realizations from the language potential, c) the need to study enough of the surrounding textual environment of a given utterance to explain or understand its wording.

Meaning is realized by the structure as a whole in that a noun in the clause, for example, may function simultaneously as subject, actor and theme; that is, it encodes meaning because for each of the three functions it is interpreted against other elements of the system. The three functions conflate in the clause (below and above) to create messages, and messages come together in the form of texts. By separating each function, we can obtain a better understanding of how the system works. The fact that the textual metafunction is realized in the theme of the clause, and that it is identified by position (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) make theme analysis to be an optimal tool to study word order. But we must bear in mind that elements in thematic structure play a role in the other two systems. Thus, we are focusing on the theme for study purposes but that element is multifunctional. This means that all the factors that interlock in the creation of meaning are being considered. Moreover, due to its initial position, theme is not only concerned with the arrangement of the elements within the clause but also with the mapping of each clause within the text.

Thus the study of word order through an analysis of theme has a double advantage: the fixed position within the clause and its textual role at discourse level.

Further, "the pattering of clause Themes through a text tends to differ from one register to another" (Halliday 1994: 336). Consequently, a study of word order not only must include real occurring data in texts, but it must be applied comparatively across different types of text. Language variation has been defined as "the varying frequency of lexical and grammatical features across different text types" (Stubbs 1993: 33). Furthermore, differences can be appreciated not only across different text types but also within a given text (Swales 1990). As seen earlier in this section, some more recent studies include real occurring data from spoken sources; however, the level of delicacy needs to be greater in order to include field, tenor, mode and purpose. Even a short conversation may include different clear communicative purposes such as questions and statements, and narrative sections. Texts have their own internal organization and one of the functions of the theme is to mark these internal boundaries. In the study of theme (and word order) it then becomes vital to keep the two perspectives in the analysis: the theme in contrast to the rheme of each clause and the theme in relation to the rest of the themes within the text. This can be seen with a simple illustration with interrogative clauses.

Since variation is sensitive to purpose, it is hardly surprising that, for example, the modality of a clause is marked formally by a distinctive word order. The ordering of the clause is usually important (more so in English) in understanding it as a demand and not as a statement. Yet when we look at a discourse containing questions we must consider the question with the corresponding response; the ordering of the question stems from its nature as a demand and the ordering of the response stems from the fact that it is a response to the question. Both question and answer form a thematic pattern as consecutive clauses and they contribute to the general thematic frame of the dialogue or method of development.

Previous thematic studies have found correlations between thematic content and register. Register on the one hand is linked to the method of development and to the progression patterns of a text. Therefore a study of word order must include sample texts from different registers in order to identify the corresponding thematic elements for each type of text. Once the thematic content is isolated, the formal realization of these elements will be examined in order to explore possible correspondence between register, thematic content, and formal realizations. In this respect Berry (1987) argues for a correspondence between different types of information and their grammatical realization in different types of text; moreover, she states that these differences are tied to discourse function.

Given that our findings are intended to be used in the context of the educational environment, texts have been selected in accordance with the type of text that learners of Advanced Spanish courses are required to deal with; learners need to extract information from newspaper articles, write essays in an academic fashion, and undertake speaking tasks in informal settings: conversations and discussions. Therefore the text samples selected for analysis include journalistic articles, academic texts, and extracts from informal conversations.

5. Theme Analyses

5.1 News Reports

5.1.1 Introduction

The interest in studying journalistic reports on a particular news item is far-ranging. Firstly, the main function of this type of article is clearly informative, therefore a fair degree of objectivity is expected from the reporter. This is not always the case, as Hawes and Thomas (1996) show by examining the theme in two British newspapers, *The Sun* and *The Times*. They corroborate that both papers, despite being perceived as radically different, share the same political views and that these views are defended in their editorials by means of different thematic composition. In this respect, newspaper reports are different from articles that appear in other sections of newspapers such as editorials and columns. Francis (1990 in Fries 1995b) compared news reports, editorials and letters of complaint as three different genres.

Further, news reports are intended for a wide non-specialised audience; however, since journalists and their readers are contemporary, a great deal of social and cultural assumptions are bound to be expected on the part of the reader. These references, which are part of everyday life for the average reader, can increase the difficulties in understanding for learners.

Finally, on the practical and methodological aspects, the fact that the same incident tends to be covered in more than one newspaper makes it possible to study more than one text of the same incident; thus, the comparison of thematic choices in two (or more) texts is feasible. This comparison is useful to identify possible differences arising from the journalists' own views and purposes, or from the newspapers' ethos. Thus, once these differences are identified, some conclusions on thematic choices corresponding with specific registers can be drawn.

One feature which is commonly found in newspaper reports in Spanish is the division of the article into three sections, thereby aimed at providing staged information. The first part is the title, which tends to be informative; the second part is the summary, which expands on the information given in the title; finally, the main body, the article

itself, which usually offers the breakdown of the events containing details such as when, where, and other types of circumstances pertinent to the case.

The objective of studying theme content and its grammatical realizations is to identify word order trends in the light of thematic pressure derived from the register and genre of this type of texts. Thus the analysis includes thematic content, thematic patterns of progression, and the method of development.

Before such analysis is carried out, however, consideration will be given to initial position placement according to criteria such as topic, definitiveness and information structure, which have often been used in the literature to justify word order realizations in Spanish.

The two articles chosen were published in two main Spanish national papers: *El País* and *ABC* in the year 2000. *El País* is a newspaper known as a left-wing socialist supporter and the *ABC* is known as a conservative pro-monarchic journal. Both reports cover a case of domestic violence. It may be also relevant to note that the report extracted from *El País*, which is longer, has been written by a male journalist and the report from the *ABC* by a female journalist. A version of both articles is included at the end of this section (p.97).

5.1.2 Initial Position and Topic

As mentioned in section 2, initial position has been linked to topic. Since topic is a feature, which works above clause level, one main obstacle is to demonstrate how topic affects word order within the clause. Even overlooking this important aspect, the correspondence between initial position and topic is difficult to maintain. The topic of these two articles seems to be a crime of domestic violence; however, there is hardly any explicit reference to the actual act. In fact, the crime itself appears preverbally coded as a circumstance (consequence) in just one of the clauses in the *ABC* article (*como consecuencia del ataque*). Other related terms '*vejaciones, maltratos*' occur in fronted position in three instances in total. Halliday (1994) claims that the first clause of a text

serves to establish the discourse topic. Since both headlines are made up of a full sentence, it seems reasonable to consider them as part of the text.

> *El País* (1) *Un hombre en libertad provisional por maltrato a su mujer la mata en plena calle.*
> *ABC* (1) *Mata a su mujer estando en libertad provisional por violencia doméstica.*

In both headlines the verb *mata* and the victim of the crime *su mujer* are included. The possessive adjective *su* fronted to *mujer* identifies the victim as the wife of the killer. While the headline from *El País* overtly expresses the subject glossed as *un hombre*, the *ABC* headline is markedly different in that it omits the perpetrator. However, the omission of the subject in absolute initial position does not obscure the meaning or the identity of the attacker. The summary and the main body of both reports present the sequence of events from the perspective of the participants involved in the act, i.e. the actions of each of the participants. Thus, the elements that appear before the verb are selected mainly among the human participants, predominantly the attacker, followed by the victim, the police, the mayor of the town where the crime took place and medical services. The *ABC* text has the victim in initial position 9 times and the attacker 10 whilst *El País* has 11 and 18 entries for each respectively. Additionally, circumstances conveying time, spatial references, and cause are also placed in fronted position. It therefore seems difficult to explain preverbal position by resorting to topic value. It would be worth considering, for example, the differences in choices of preverbal elements that an editorial on this same issue produces.

5.1.3 Initial Position and Definiteness

Another criterion that has been used to explain word order is definiteness in that a correspondence between the definiteness of a noun and its expression in initial position has been established. If we look at elements in initial position, there are four instances in which an apparent indefinite noun occurs in initial position. Those indefinite nouns are expanded by prepositional phrases or adjectives. In *El País,* clause (2), *un juez* is

postmodified by the prepositional phrase *de Navarra*, which identifies him as one of the judges with jurisdiction in the region where the crime took place; that is, it provides a reference point for the reader. In other cases, the noun is presented as determined on the basis that it can be inferred from the previous part of the text. For example,

ABC (12) *Al parecer, una de las puñaladas le afectó el corazón.*

The noun *puñaladas* is headed by the definite article *las*, which suggests that the stabs have been mentioned before. In fact, it is the verb 'stabbed', which has been mentioned previously; the reader can infer the stabs as result of the action encoded by the verb. These nouns are selected as subject in preverbal position irrespective of the degree of definiteness they may have. Notice also that indefinite nouns tend to gravitate towards the first part of the text, where the participants are introduced for the first time.

Other nouns are headed by a definite article if they refer to a group or class identifiable by the reader from the general sociocultural knowledge, such as the mayor and the police; however, these nouns are also expanded by a prepositional phrase, which includes the name of the village where the crime took place, as examples 38 and 6 below show:

El País (38) *La Policía Municipal de Villava vigilaba al agresor desde el pasado 11 de marzo,*
ABC (6) *Según la Policía local de Villava, el sospechoso, Jesús Gil Peláez, se encontraba en libertad provisional,*

The expansion has the function of particularising the generic reference of the noun to the extent that it is the expansion that makes the noun definite. In other words, the phoric reference of the definite article is found in the next part of the noun group rather than in the preceding part of the text. Thus, the apparent (in)definiteness of a noun does not serve as a parameter to anticipate placement within the clause.

5.1.4 Initial Position and Old/New

Closely linked to definiteness, the distinction between old and new information is another criterion repeatedly mentioned to explain word order in general and subject position in particular. In that, the status of a subject as old or given information favours

its placement in preverbal position. As explained in section 2, one of the main problems faced in the distinction of information value is the variety of interpretations with which old information has been associated. One assertion can be made, that items are either textually given or textually new. They are textually given when they have occurred previously in the discourse and they are textually new when it is the first time they appear in the text; a textually new participant may be considered within the given scale on the basis of its inferrability. Secondly, and equally important, is the fact that constituents are presented by the writer/speaker as intentionally given or new; this intention is most likely to be formally marked.

Textually new elements may be introduced in the rheme prior to being placed in the thematic position. For example, both headlines introduce the victim as the wife in the rheme. She then appears as theme in several clauses. There are cases, however, in which textually new subjects occur in preverbal position for the first time in the text (*un hombre, un juez, una mujer*). Note that *una mujer* refers to the victim of the attack, who has already been mentioned but the journalist is treating her as new; that is, she is not identified as the victim until the rheme.

ABC (3) *Una mujer de 37 años y madre de dos hijos, Alicia Arístegui Beraza, murió ayer apuñalada por su ex marido en Villava cerca de Pamplona..*

The use of the indefinite article indicates that the writer is presenting these participants as new items (but not as part of the focus). Notice also that those noun groups are expanded by prepositional phrases or adjectives in order to establish an anchor to assist the reader in decoding their referents. The elaboration on the new subject makes it a suitable candidate as a thematic element and it establishes a point of departure for the rest of the clause. This means that textually new participants can occur in preverbal position.

Other textually new themes are presented as given (headed by a definite article) on the basis of a certain degree of inferrability. The inference may be made either from the previous part of the text or from the social and cultural context shared by the writer and reader; this is the case with the police, and with the mayor in both articles. Nonetheless, those nouns are also modified, the post-modification provides an anchor for the noun, which narrows down their referent.

Expansions, on the other hand, also occur in cases in which the subject is textually given; for example in sentence 7 (*El País*): *El agresor, que anoche seguía en paradero desconocido*. The aggressor can easily be identified as another lexical label for the ex-husband; the relative clause attached to the nominalised adjective clearly conveys new information to the reader. Thus the expansion in fact provides new information (still within the thematic slot). This enables the journalist to foreground new information. The point of the clause, however, still remains in the rheme; that is, the communicative potential of the main clause remains open until the rheme. The journalist has distributed the information along both parts of the clause: the theme and the rheme. Apart from maximising the communicative potential of each clause, the new information in theme makes the text progress forward. Adding a relative clause to the noun subject in theme, as in the example just seen, is one of the syntactic ways in which new information can be conveyed within the theme. Other syntactic means of doing so are explained later in the section on formal realizations of theme.

This way of distributing the information in the theme and rheme illustrates that the distinction between given and new fails to predict or indeed explain word order.

5.1.5 Initial Position and Theme

The themes in the *ABC* are as follows:

No	Textual	Interpersonal	Ideational
1			Ø [ex husband]
2			Ø [ex husband]
3			Una mujer de 37 años y madre de dos hijos, Alicia
4			El hombre
5			La víctima lo
6		Según la Policía local	el sospechoso, Jesús Gil Peláez
7	Además		[el sospechoso]
8			Sobre las nueve de la mañana de ayer, el hombre
9	y		[el hombre]
10	Después		[el hombre] se
11			Como consecuencia del ataque, la víctima

No	Textual	Interpersonal	Ideational
12		Al parecer,	una de las puñaladas le
13			Enviada al lugar una UVI móvil se le
14	pero		aunque ingresó aun con vida en el Hospital de Navarra [la víctima]
15			La policía nacional se
16	y		en sólo unas horas [La policía nacional]
17	Sin embargo		su ocupante
18		Según	
19			'este hombre
20			Ante las reiteradas agresiones y vejaciones que la víctima venía sufriendo, ésta
21		- explicó Ucar -	"Desde los servicios sociales, (- explicó Ucar -) al ver que asunto era lo suficientemente importante como se para pasárselo a la Policía Local,
22			La policía local
23			[La policía local]
24			La víctima
25	y		[La víctima]

The themes in *El País* are shown below:

No	Textual	Interpersonal	Ideational
1			Un hombre en libertad provisional por maltrato a su mujer
2			Un juez de Navarra
3			"Si te divorcias, te
4		.	Jesus Gil Peláez de 38 años, se lo
5			Ayer a las 9,12 [Jesus Gil Peláez]
6			[Jesus Gil Peláez] lo
7			El agresor, que anoche seguía en paradero desconocido,
8	y		sobre él
9			La policia local de Villava
10			Jesús
11			A la altura del numero 6 de la calle de Serapio Huici [Jesús]
12	y		por la espalda y sin mediar palabra [Jesús]
13			Antes de abandonar el lugar, el agresor
14			"Ahora [yo]
15			[(reporting clause)]
16	A continuación,	Según la declaración de los testigos	[Jesus]

17	y		[Jesus] se
18			Ni siquiera [Jesus]
19			[Jesus]
20			A esa hora los niños
21			La ambulancia que los equipos de Protección Civil-SOS Navarra enviaron al lugar poco
22			Trasladada al hospital de Navarra las maniobras de reanimación
23			Las patrullas policiales
24			El vehículo
25			El ex marido
26			El dispositivo policial se
27		Alfonso Ucar, alcalde de Villava, localidad en la que residió la pareja hasta su separación declaró que	la actitud agresiva del marido
28			"Esta señora "
29			[(reporting clause)]
30			"Hace varios meses Alicia
31			Alicia y una hermana
32			[(reporting clause)]
33			[(reporting clause)]
34			Sobre Jesús Gil Peláez
35			La víctima
36			Alicia Arístegui, miembro de una familia de nueve hermanos
37	pero		[Alicia]
38			La policía municipal de Villava
39	y		[La policía municipal de Villava]
40		Fuentes próximas a la familia de la víctima manifestaron que	las amenazas y coacciones a la víctima
41			y que Jesús Gil
42			"[Jesús Gil] "
43			[(reporting clause)]
44			Hace unos dos años la pareja
45			Ella
46	pero		posteriormente [ella]
47			Al continuar los malos tratos y amenazas Alicia
48			El ayuntamiento de Villava

5.1.5.1 Theme and Subject

Both texts show that themes are, to a large extent, the human participants involved in the incident and in the aftermath of the attack, namely: the attacker, the victim, the police, the mayor, social services, witnesses, the victim's family and friends; but there are also inanimate participants in theme, such as time references, places, an ambulance, the attack, threats, and abuses. These elements all have in common that they belong to the ideational world, that is, they have referential meaning.

The realization of the ideational elements, however, is not the same. Subjects are overwhelmingly thematic and are selected largely among human participants in both texts; other participants realized as subjects are the ambulance, the vehicle and one of the stabs that the victim received.

The same subject may continue for several, frequently two, clauses, so forming a thematic chain. In these chains the subject is elided after the first clause. The start of each mini-chain involves the insertion of the subject, overtly expressed regardless of its textual status. In both texts some subjects, mainly the attacker and the victim, are reintroduced several times; in those cases, despite the subject being textually given, they are rendered largely in the form of a lexicalised noun or a nominalised adjective; thus subjects are hardly ever substituted by referential items. In total there are three cases of subject realised as a pronoun; two correspond to the demonstrative *esta* and the third one is a case of the personal pronoun subject (*ella*). The use of the third person personal pronoun subject is rare; it is normally used to discern between two members of a pair, as is the case in this instance. Thus, in order to avoid repetition the subjects are expressed using synonyms or semantic related terms such as *víctima, mujer; hombre, sospechoso*.

Frequently, noun groups contain pre or post-modifications. Such expansions include relative clauses, prepositional phrases, and appositions; as *El País* sentence 36 shows:

> *El País* (36) *Alicia Aristegui, miembro de una familia de nueve hermanos, se había desplazado a vivir con su madre a la cercana localidad de Huarte-Pamplona,*

One case in which the subject occurs in the rheme in *El País* involves a prepositional phrase including a personal pronoun (*sobre él*). The pronoun renders the attacker, which

has been thematic previously; it appears then in the current theme coded as a prepositional phrase; its function is that of the complement of the verb *pender* 'hang over'. Note that the prepositional phrase maintains the attacker as theme but this is realised by a different grammatical function. In effect, there has been no change in theme; the grammatical realization of the thematic element is what is different but the same participant has been selected as theme. This realization allows theme continuation but it involves the postposition of the subject. It is worth noting that the theme is human and the subject is not. This seems to corroborate the appreciated tendency to select themes among human participants. Green (1976) affirms that fronted noun groups often involve human participants.

In the *ABC* text, there are two thematic slots that do not contain the subject and they are both instances of *se*-passive constructions.

(13) *Enviada al lugar una UVI móvil, se le realizaron maniobras de reanimación,*

(14) *pero aunque ingresó aun con vida en el Hospital de Navarra pereció poco después.*

The first *se*-construction has in the theme a non-finite clause, an IO *le*, referring to the victim and *se*, which is anticipatory of the postponed passive subject (*maniobras de reanimación*). The omission of the agent (the medical staff) is granted grammatically by the use of the *se*-construction and lexically by part of the content of the non-finite (*UVI móvil*), which occurs in the theme.

(21) *"Desde los servicios sociales, - (22) explicó Ucar - al ver que el asunto era lo suficientemente importante como para pasárselo a la Policía Local, se propició una reunión entre Alicia, su hermana, la asistenta social, y el jefe de la Policía de Villava para tratar el tema".*

In the example above the thematic slot is occupied by a prepositional phrase 'from the social services', the projecting clause is an interpolation; then a long non-finite dependent clause and *se*, whose referent is the grammatical subject *una reunión* placed in the rheme. The logical subject is the social services' staff, who are rendered in thematic position through a prepositional phrase. It is worth pointing out that in these two cases the logical subjects can be overtly expressed in the theme with the same processes and that this operation simply involves removing the passive *se*-construction:

Los equipos médicos de la UVI móvil enviada al lugar no consiguieron reanimarla.
"Los servicios sociales -explicó Ucar - al ver que el asunto era lo suficientemente
importante como para pasárselo a la Policía Local, propiciaron una reunión entre
Alicia, su hermana, la asistenta social, y el jefe de la Policía de Villava para tratar el
tema".

The fact that the *se*-construction has been used to avoid the expression of the agent as the subject seems to indicate that the subject is the default thematic choice. The motivation that may have led the journalist to prefer one structure to the other is not clear; but, arguably, the referents of the logical subjects (the medical staff and social services) appear in the theme, but are realised by a different grammatical function. It may be that the journalist has not the specific staff details but it is also significant that, with the exception of the police, there are no other humans functioning as subject besides the attacker and the victim in the *ABC* article.

A further case of thematic slot with no subject occurs in the reporting clauses. When the reporting clause is expressed after the reported it is common to opt for a VS arrangement. The empty theme is possible because the reporting comes immediately after the reported. This means that the theme of the clause is left empty. The meaning encoded in the reporting is the equivalent to the prepositional 'according to' but with the advantage of being structurally independent. As a clause, its structure can accommodate extra information. As an interpersonal element, it has more freedom of movement; hence it can occur as an interpolation as in the example just seen.

5.1.5.2 Other Ideational Elements in Theme

Complements (DO and IO) in theme are realised exclusively as clitics (*lo, le*). Thus the second most common thematic elements are circumstances realized as prepositional phrases, adverbial phrases, and non-finite dependent clauses. They express circumstances such as time referents (*sobre las nueve de la mañana de ayer*), consequence (*como consecuencia del ataque*), and cause (*ante las reiteradas agresiones y vejaciones que la víctima venía sufriendo*). There are two non-finite phrases in each text

in the thematic structure: the first one involves a past participle and the second an infinitive. There is a single case of a finite dependent clause in initial position.

This is important because the meaning encapsulated in adjuncts and their thematic position is relevant to both experiential content and textual organization; while subjects are central roles of the processes, adjuncts (and dependent clauses) provide background information. But, as explained in section 3, the role of the adjuncts (and of dependent clauses) in thematic position is not only ideational but also textual; unlike conjunctions and conjunctive adjuncts, they play a part in the transitivity structure; that is, they provide referential content. The textual role of the circumstantial adjuncts stem from the type of meanings they encode, which are similar to the type of relation that conjunctive elements render, but it also comes from the fact that they are placed in theme. Thus, the expression of circumstantial adjuncts in theme makes the clause more communicative (ideational content is foregrounded) at the same time that it contributes to the construal of the texture of the discourse.

Further, the preference for non-finite dependent clauses over finite dependent clauses is also significant. Dependent clauses also fulfil the double function of providing a textual anchor and providing ideational content. The type of relationship established between the dependent clause and the main clause is made explicit by conjunctive elements. Non-finite dependent clauses differ from finite in that the logical dependency between them and the main clause is not explicit: sentence 22 in *El País: Trasladada al hospital de Navarra, las maniobras de reanimación;* in sentence 13 of the *ABC: Enviada al lugar una UVI móvil.* The first of these can be interpreted as 'although she was taken to Navarra hospital'.

Moreover, the use of the non-finite constructions provides a structure which does not require the expression of the subject. This type of construction can then be useful if the subject (agent) is not known, or if the subject is unnecessary or unwanted. One clear advantage of using non-finite constructions is that much information can be provided in a shorter space, which may be an important asepct for the journalist.

It also worth noticing in these cases that the entire dependent clause is textually new; it does provide new details but it occurs in the theme fronted to the dominant clause. Both adjuncts and dependent clauses in theme allow the writer to foreground new details

without exhausting the communicative potential of the main clause. The content coded in the dependent clause serves then as a local framework for the main clause. However, it is important to emphasise that the information foregrounded in the dependent clause is presented by the writer as background information. The same content can be expressed in the rheme of the main clause or as an independent clause. Thus, we may wish to consider the motivations behind the choice of one particular wording in a given text.

5.1.5.3 Interpersonal Themes

The number of interpersonal thematic elements in these news reports is very low. There is one single case of the modal element *al parecer* in the *ABC* article. However, modality also includes references to sayers, which are included as the source of the information: this is the case of the police, the mayor, witnesses and family members, who are quoted as informants. This is commonly done in journalism where the reporter acknowledges the sources of their information. The low modality seems to be congruent with the expectation of the genre in that the main function of news reports is supposed to convey information objectively. But, as will be shown later, a certain degree of modality is encoded in the lexis ('appraisal', Thompson 2004).

5.1.5.4 Textual Themes

In both texts under discussion the overall number of textual themes is comparatively low; in *El País* under 15% of the themes contain a textual element, whereas in *ABC* it is 28%. Most of the conjunctive elements encode a meaning of 'addition': the conjunction *y* occurs in 7 instances out of a total of 12 textual elements; and conjunctive adjuncts occur twice: *después* and *a continuación*. There are three cases of adversative conjunctions: *sin embargo* and *pero*. Textual themes overtly signal the logical relationship between two consecutive clauses or sentences. A low level of explicit textual markers means that the logical connections are mostly implicit. This is

more prominent in the article from *El País*; the percentage of textual themes is nearly half of the porcentage of textual elements in the *ABC* article. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 549) state that the different levels of conjunctive relations are a feature that distinguishes discourse in English across registers and across texts in the same register.

McCabe (1999) found a low level of textual elements in history texts, both in American English and Spanish textbooks. She recommends a more explicit signaling of logical meanings as an orienting tool for learners. Martin (1993: 235) observes very little explicit conjunctive relations of time, cause and comparison in historical explanations. This, according to Martin, is due to the fact that those relations are realised within the clauses through grammatical metaphors.

In the reports under discussion here the relationship between the semantic and the grammatical categories is 'congruent' (Halliday's term) in that people are realized as nouns, actions as verbs and so on. Expressions of time, cause or condition are expressed as circumstantial adjuncts, i.e. as experiential external meaning rather than as a logical relationship.

5.1.6 Thematic Progression

As seen above, both journalists have selected as the thematic content, i.e. as the starting point for each clause, human participants or institutions, which play a role in the events surrounding the attack. The choice of ideational themes create texture, for example, keeping the same element in theme over a series of consecutive clauses to mark continuation; that is, resorting to constant theme chains. The continuation of theme is marked by the common subject theme, which tends to be elided in the second pair of two consecutive clauses. A way of making the text advance is achieved by making theme an element from the previous rheme, that is, a simple linear theme; however, this type of theme progression is hardly ever used, there are only three cases in the *ABC* article:

(12) *Al parecer, una de las puñaladas le afectó el corazón.*

(15) *La policial nacional se ha hecho cargo de las investigaciones del caso* (16) *y en solo unas horas consiguió localizar vehículo del agresor en la calle Canteras, de Ansoáin, cerca de la capital de Navarra, en dirección a San Sebastián.*

(17) *Sin embargo su ocupante se había dado a la fuga.*

(The theme of 12 comes from the rheme of 9)

The most frequent means of moving the text forward is by changing the subject. These changes are not always marked, but are made by simply introducing a different subject in the theme. The *ABC* article, however, shows a higher tendency to signal overtly how two consecutive sentences are linked. For example: the change of theme from the attacker to his victim in sentence 11 is signalled by the adjunct *como consecuencia del ataque;* then the victim is the theme of that clause and of subsequent ones. Theme changes from attacker, to victim, police, family members; these changes in themes ensure that the text develops. Cohesion is mostly implicit. This is made possible by the fact that all of the subjects in the theme have in common their involvement in the incident and their involvement is taken for granted in the socialcultural context of Spain. Occasionally conjunctive elements mark explicitly how two clauses are related, more so in the *ABC* article than in *El País*. This means that some sentences are presented as thematically independent from the preceding one. The most recurring chain is the constant thematic pattern made up of two sentences, but both texts also have some longer chains particularly when the attacker or the victim is thematic. In longer chains of constant theme the subject is reintroduced at fairly fixed intervals as a reminder that the theme is still current. Strictly speaking theme continuation implies that the text is not advancing; this may explain why in longer chains of constant theme subject, circumstantial adjuncts and dependent non-finite clauses occur in theme; thus, their function is then to make the text progress by providing a dimension in which the main participant, the subject, is moved forward. The circumstantial content in theme mark predominantly the sequencing of events. This means that the events are presented as chronologically connected rather than connected by any other logical relation such as cause and effect, for example. The abundance of circumstantial adjuncts and non-finite dependent clauses in theme correlates with the low number of textual themes. The

number of textual themes is higher in the *ABC* report, whereas the text from *El País* contains longer thematic chains. There are no instances of derived thematic patterns in either of the texts.

5.1.7 Conclusions

The above analysis shows that the subject is the default thematic element in declarative clauses. The subject is selected mainly among human participants in news reports, and it is expressed as a full lexicalised element. The use of personal pronouns as reference for the subjects is indeed very limited. In order to avoid lexical repetition, when the subject is overtly expressed there is a marked tendency to use different glosses to refer to a given subject. The subject may contain elaborations made up of adjectives, prepositional phrases, relative clauses and appositions. These expansions may contain textually new information or textually given information or may serve to determine the noun head.

Those cases in which the subject is not expressed in theme are projecting clauses, two instances in which the human participant is realized in a prepositional group, and in cases of *se*-constructions.

Besides the subjects, other experiential elements in theme are represented by adjuncts and non-finite clauses, with only two cases of a finite dependent clause. When complements occur in theme, they are rendered exclusively as clitic pronouns.

The number of conjunctive elements (conjunctions and conjunctive adjuncts) in theme is relatively low, but the level of textual themes in the article from *el País* is remarkedly low (below 15%) compared with 28% of *ABC*'s report. Conjunctions are represented by additive *y* and adversative *pero*. Conjunctive adjuncts include *a continuación* and *después*. The considerably large number of circumstantial adjuncts in theme contributes to the textual organization of the text in that it provides a type of textual relationship among clauses comparable to conjunctive elements.

Interpersonal themes are restricted mainly to sayers, realized either by a prepositional phrase or as the subject of the projecting clause. The subject of the projecting tends to be expressed after the verb.

There seem to be clear similarities between the thematic content and the formal realizations in both texts. This can be taken indeed as good proof of the fact that texts belonging to the same genre present similar features. This implies that conclusions can be drawn with regard to word order realizations.

However, the findings here are remarkably similar to those found in the analysis of the extract taken from *Crónica*, which belongs to the fictional narrative genre. This may appear as an indication that theme content is not sensitive to genre or indeed to register. On the other hand, some features of *Crónica* are unexpected; for example, the fact that we know in the first line the identity of the person who dies. Moreover, by page 28 (out of 193) we also know who kills him. In fact from the first paragraph the story is full of premonitions, which indicate that it is common knowledge the fact that Santiago Nasar was about to be killed. Thus, the novel is the account of how it happened; García Márquez pieces together all the circumstances and events that led to Santiago meeting his death. An outcome which could have been avoided if only somebody had done something to prevent it, but somehow nobody did. The parallelism between *Crónica* and the newspaper reports is considerable. In the reports, the reader also knows what happens, and the identity of both the victim and the attacker, from the headlines. What the report does is to explain the circumstances under which it happens, how, when, where and other background details.

These parallelisms between the thematic organization and the formal realization of the themes of two apparently different genres could indicate that the theme analysis fails to discern between genres. But in fact, the similarities found serve to corroborate that the thematic analysis highlights the common linguistic features that emerge in the three texts. These features are so similar because García Márquez uses journalistic features to tell the story. While the journalistic style of Gabriel García Márquez can be explained by the fact that the novelist had worked as a journalist for many years, the comparison of the thematic content in the three texts corroborates how successful the novel is indeed in this respect.

Conversely, given the common trends in thematic content and formal realizations in the news reports, it could easily be concluded that newspapers report events either in exactly the same or at least in a very similar way; the fact that each article was published in an ideologically different newspaper and that one of the journalists is female and the other is a male seems to make no difference. This means that the reports are then truly objective in their information. However, differences can be found between the two reports.

So far one aspect has been identified as different between the two texts, which involves the use of conjunctive elements to link consecutive sentences. This contributes to the method of development; that is, the way in which the reporter presents the information in the text. The difference between that and overtly expressing the relationship between two sentences is that the journalist is interpreting the information for the reader; for example, as cause and effect. The fact that the reporter of *El País* presents the events with less intervention may be explained by the fact that he wishes to remove any possible trait of reporter intervention in favour of presenting the facts. It is left up to reader to make the logical connections.

Further, in both texts, the attacker and his victim together with the police are made thematic in a large proportion of the sentences. There are sections where the victim is thematic and sections where the attacker is thematic; for example, in the first part, which explains how the attack was carried out, the aggressor is part of the theme in all the clauses. In total both texts have the attacker as theme more often than the victim; in the *ABC* text, however the number is closer (10 to 9); whereas in *El País* the ratio is 18 to 11.

A closer examination of the labelling of both the attacker and his victim shows that in *El País*, out of a total 18, he is given his first name four times, *un hombre* (1), *el agresor* (2), *ex marido* (1) and on seven occasions the subject referring to him has been omitted. In the *ABC*, the attacker is referred as *el hombre* in three instances and as *sospechoso* (1), *el conductor* (1), and with his full name on one occasion; the rest of the subjects rendering the attacker are omitted. Since the ex-husband is the (alleged) killer of his wife, it is expected that he will take up the thematic role as agent - and subject - in all the processes involving the actions prior to, during and after the attack. However there is a choice in terms of which lexical label to use as well as in deciding whether to express

him overtly or not. In both reports the selection of lexical referents of Alicia's killer are rather benevolent, particularly in the *ABC* report. In the article from *El País* he is referred to as the aggressor on two occasions. Moreover, the attacker is made invisible (by omitting the subject) in processes such as *mata, atacó*, and *apuñaló.*

Alicia, on the other hand, is designated as *víctima* in four instances, compared to only one entry with her full name in the *ABC*; she is also labelled as *una mujer* once and rendered as clitic pronoun *le* on two occasions. The labelling of Alicia as *víctima* makes clear that she is the victim on the one hand, but it also veils her identity and her other attributes (e.g. she is a woman, mother, sister). This is also reflected in the fact that there is less information about Alicia in the *ABC* article. Moreover, these occurrences of Alicia as *víctima* or as *le* occur in the part of the text where the journalist is explaining her death after the attack, thus she is made virtually invisible. In *El País*, Alicia is overtly expressed in theme with her first name on four occasions, there are three thematic references to family or family members, she is twice referred to as *víctima,* once she is identified as *esta señora* and once as *ella*. Thus this report paints a more normal picture of Alicia as an average Spanish woman surrounded by family members.

In sum, the report of *El País* takes a more balanced view in the choice of lexical labels, whereas the *ABC* reporter takes a more biased approach, in painting the attacker as a normal man and Alicia as a quasi-anonymous victim. It seems that *El País* lives up to its reputation as a more progressive paper.

(1) Un hombre en libertad provisional por maltrato a su mujer la mata en plena calle.
(2) Un juez de Navarra había prohibido al agresor, que huyó tras el crimen, acercarse a su esposa.

Mikel Muez, Pamplona.

(3) "Si te divorcias, te mato". (4) Jesús Gil Peláez, de 38 años, se lo había repetido muchas veces a Alicia Arístegui Beraza, de 37. (5) Ayer, a las 9.12, cumplió su advertencia. (6) Lo hizo a puñaladas y en plena vía pública, en Villava (Navarra), cuando Alicia, que tenia la guardia y custodia de los dos hijos del matrimonio (de 13 y 10 años), caminaba en compañía de una amiga. (7) El agresor, que anoche seguía en paradero desconocido, estaba en libertad provisional por violencia domestica (8) y sobre él pendía además una orden judicial de alejamiento que le prohibía acercarse a menos de 500 metros de su esposa, de la que estaba en trámites de separación. (9) La Policía Local de Villava vigilaba al agresor desde el 11 de marzo.

(10) Jesús esperaba a su víctima, a la que se acercó a bordo de un coche, un Seat Toledo. (11) A la altura del numero 6 de la calle de Serapio Huici, descendió del vehículo (12) y por la espalda y sin mediar palabra, le asestó numerosas puñaladas. (13) Antes de abandonar el lugar, el agresor profirió amenazas de muerte contra la madre de la víctima y uno de sus hermanos. (14) "Ahora voy a ir a por vosotros", (15) aseguran los testigos que gritó Jesús.
(16) A continuación, según la declaración de los testigos, regresó hasta el vehículo (17) y se alejó.
(18) Ni siquiera corrió en su escapada. (19) Abandonó el lugar con tranquilidad, mientras Alicia se desangraba en el suelo y su compañera, embarazada, sufría una crisis nerviosa. (20) A esa hora, los niños estaban en el colegio.
(21) La ambulancia que los equipos de Protección Civil-SOS Navarra enviaron al lugar poco pudieron hacer por la mujer. (22) Trasladada al Hospital de Navarra, las maniobras de reanimación no dieron resultado debido a la gravedad de las múltiples heridas que padecía.
(23) Las patrullas policiales comenzaron inmediatamente la búsqueda del agresor. (23) El vehículo fue localizado poco después aparcado en la calle de las Canteras de la vecina localidad de Ansoáin. (25) El ex marido había huido. (26) El dispositivo policial se extendió por toda la comarca de Pamplona.
(27) Alfonso Ucar (UPN), alcalde de Villava, localidad en la que residió la pareja hasta su separación, declaró que la actitud agresiva del marido era bien conocida por los servicios de atención municipal.
(28) "Esta señora había recibido en varias ocasiones malos tratos por parte de su marido", (29) confirmó el alcalde de Villava.
(30) "Hace varios meses, Alicia denunció a los servicios sociales de base del ayuntamiento las agresiones y vejaciones que sufría a manos de Jesús; (31) Alicia y una hermana se reunieron con miembros de la Policia Municipal", (32) indicó Ucar, "que decidió iniciar un servicio disuasorio de vigilancia", (33) explicó el alcalde.
(34) Sobre Jesús Gil Peláez pendía desde el 18 de enero de 2002 una orden judicial de alojamiento que le prohibía acercarse a menos de 500 metros de su ex esposa. (35) La víctima había presentado anteriormente ante la policía denuncias de amenazas y malos tratos.
(36) Alicia Arístegui, miembro de una familia de nueve hermanos, se había desplazado a vivir con su madre a la cercana localidad de Huarte-Pamplona, (37) pero frecuentaba Villava, donde tenía muchas amigas. (38) La Policía Municipal de Villava vigilaba al agresor desde el pasado 11·de marzo (39) y tenía orden de intervenir cualquier objeto portado por este susceptible de ser utilizado para agredir o intimidar a la mujer.

(40) Fuentes próximas a la familia de la victima manifestaron que las amenazas y coacciones a la víctima eran continuas (41) y que Jesús Gil insistía en que si la mujer se separaba de él "la mataría" al no poder soportar la situación. (42) "Es un individuo peligroso", (43) manifestaron. (44) Hace unos dos años la pareja se separó. (45) Ella abandonó durante un tiempo el domicilio familiar, (46) pero posteriormente regresó. (47) Al continuar los malos tratos y amenazas, Alicia reunió el valor suficiente para alejarse definitivamente de su marido e iniciar los trámites de la separación. (48) El ayuntamiento de Villava se reunió en la tarde de ayer con carácter extraordinario y urgente para condenar el asesinato de esta vecina.

ABC 10/04/2002

(1) Mata a su mujer estando en libertad provisional por violencia domestica.
(2) Incumplió la orden de alejamiento y acabó con su vida en plena calle, de día y ante testigos.

(3) Una mujer de 37 años y madre de dos hijos, Alicia Arístegui Beraza, murió ayer apuñalada por su ex marido en Villava cerca de Pamplona. (4) El hombre estaba en libertad provisional por delitos de violencia doméstica. (5) La víctima lo había denunciado en varias ocasiones por malos tratos y amenazas.

Begoña López. Pamplona.
(6) Según la Policía local de Villava, el sospechoso, Jesús Gil Peláez, se encontraba en libertad provisional, ya que se le había relacionado con episodios de violencia domestica en otras ocasiones. (7) Además, tenía una orden de alejamiento, no acercarse a su ex mujer a menos de 500 metros. (8) Sobre las 9 de la mañana de ayer, el hombre descendió de su vehículo (9) y atacó por la espalda a su ex mujer, a la que apuñaló repetidamente delante de varios testigos. (10) Después, se dio a la fuga. (11) Como consecuencia del ataque, la victima resultó gravemente herida. (12) Al parecer, una de las puñaladas le afectó el corazón. (13) Enviada al lugar una UVI móvil, se le realizaron maniobras de reanimación, (14) pero aunque ingresó aun con vida en el Hospital de Navarra pereció poco después.
(15) La policia nacional se ha hecho cargo de las investigaciones del caso (16) y en solo unas horas consiguió localizar vehículo del agresor en la calle Canteras, de Ansoáin, cerca de la capital de Navarra, en dirección a San Sebastián. (17) Sin embargo su ocupante se había dado a la fuga. (18) Según relataba ayer el alcalde de Villava, Alfonso Ucar, (19) "este hombre amenazaba a su ex mujer cada vez que la veía, hasta que hoy la ha matado cuando iba por la calle acompañada por una amiga". (20) Ante las reiteradas agresiones y vejaciones que la víctima venía sufriendo, ésta se había dirigido hace unos meses a los servicios sociales del Ayuntamiento en busca de ayuda. (21) "Desde los servicios sociales, -(22) explicó Ucar - al ver que el asunto era lo suficientemente importante como para pasárselo a la Policía Local, se propició una reunión entre Alicia, su hermana, la asistenta social, y el jefe de la Policía de Villava para tratar el tema".

Guardia y Custodia

(23) La Policía Local vigilaba al individuo ante el temor de que reiterara las agresiones contra Alicia Arístegui. (24) Estaban autorizados a intervenirle cualquier objeto susceptible de ser utilizado para agredir o intimidar. (25) La víctima vivía en la cercana población de Huarte con unos familiares y tenía la guardia y custodia de los dos hijos de la pareja, quienes en el momento de los hechos estaban en el colegio.

5.2 Theme in Academic Texts

5.2.1 Introduction

The analysis of the newspaper reports has shown the type of content that tends to appear in theme and its realization; it revealed that experiential themes are selected mainly among human participants involved in the case and among circumstances (time and location mainly, but also cause and consequence) surrounding the event. It is anticipated that the analysis of academic texts will shed different results due to the differences in field and purpose. The type of experiential content available to appear in theme within such texts includes scholars themselves, theories, publications, time of publications, specific terms related to the specific topic and so forth. In news articles it was shown that the journalist writer did not always make explicit connections between two consecutive sentences. Logical relations in academic texts may appear less obvious to the reader if they are not made explicit.

Whittaker (1995) studies theme choices in academic texts in the economic and linguistic fields. Her findings suggest that a higher proportion of certain types of Themes, textual compared to the interpersonal themes, are a feature of academic writing. Textual themes serve to frame the sentence either by referring to parts of the text itself or by referring to a relation holding in the outside world (cause, reason, consequence). Moreover, she claims that a high density of textual themes is more prominent when authors engage in argumentation; that is, when they defend their theories, question previous works in the same field and so on. Interpersonal themes, on the other hand, were less frequent in the data studied by Whittaker. This type of writing is expected to give the impression of objectivity; yet scholars aim at validating their own theories; this is usually done by supporting their claims with data, explaining states of affairs, showing cause and effect, reasons, and consequences. It seems, then, natural for academic texts to offer a high number of textual themes. Whittaker's research was intended to help Spanish learners of English in interpreting academic articles.

The main objective here is to help learners and instructors in writing tasks at advanced level. These tasks are usually designed not only as learning and testing tools but also as preparation for the type of essay writing tasks that students must undertake once they reach higher education. Findings, however, will serve also to assist in reading comprehension tasks.

I have chosen to study both English and Spanish academic texts in order to compare side by side both languages. The comparison will help to identify the similarities and differences between the two languages that may account for the typical interferences that the first language plays when learning a foreign language. Further, the analyses will identify common features in both languages pertinent to the academic register. Moreover, the thematic analysis of the Spanish academic text will reveal which elements tend to appear in theme position on the basis of their function in the construal of the text. Thus, a correlation between thematic content and formal realizations can then be established in order to identify formal features, particularly word order traits. The results obtained will be used, in section 6, to compare with learners' writing samples, in order to specify the linguistic source of the problems students tend to have when writing in the target language.

The academic genre is a vast field, which arguably shares similar characteristics. Nonetheless, factors such as the style of the author, the date of publication, the intended audience, and the media in which texts have been published need to be taken into consideration as potential sources of differences. In order to minimize the possible variations that may occur due to these factors, I have selected two contemporary texts on the same topic (linguistic variation) targeted to similar audiences (academic students and scholars). Despite these considerations we must be aware of the fact that possible disparities between the two texts may also be due to factors belonging to the macro-organization of the texts. Thus the introduction, for example, deals typically with the purposes of the paper, the justification of the study and the sections in which it is divided; the analysis of data tends to present and compare figures, percentages, examples and tables; the conclusion reviews the main points and offers suggestions. The Spanish text analysed belongs to a central part, whereas the English extract consists of the introduction

section of the book. However, the fact that both texts are self-contained units means that they have their own internal organization in their own rights.

The data

Spanish text 1 (SP1): 'Estudios sobre la variación lingüística', in *Dialectología y sociolingüística españolas*, by Francisco Gimeno Menéndez. Universidad de Alicante. 1990. Pages 144-148.
English text 1 (EN1): 'Introduction', in *Variation in an English dialect*, by Jenny Cheshire. CUP. 1982. Pages 1-2.

Both texts are included in an appendix at the end of this section (p.113); themes have been underlined.

5.2.2 Themes in the Spanish Text (SP1)

5.2.2.1 Theme Content in SP1

The title gives an indication of the topic of the text *la variación lingüística* (linguistic variation). The first rheme of the first sentence gives an indication of the text-specific concerns: linguistic variation and the method of quantitative analysis (*la variación lingüística y los métodos de análisis cuantitativo*).

All experiential themes belong to the field of sociolinguistics and can be classified into three kinds: linguistic terms, publications/linguists, and other experiential elements in addition to the sociolinguistic terms or publications. Among the first group are, for example, *la distribución social y estilística, "modelo cuantitativo", las reglas variables, los estudios variacionistas, la sociolingüística hispánica*. In the second group the nouns refer to publications: *publicación, texto, posición teórica y metodológica, primer análisis, la monografía*. In addition to these elements expressions of time such as *desde la pionera publicación, en nuestros días* are also included in theme.

5.2.2.2 Grammatical Realizations of Ideational Themes

The majority of these themes are realized as subjects (in 27 out of 31 clauses), adjuncts and dependent clauses (finite and non-finite). Subjects are realised as noun groups, which are pre and post-modified by determiners, adjectives and prepositional phrases. The structure of the noun group is that of a noun preceded by a determiner and followed by an adjective or a prepositional phrase. Most of the nominal groups in thematic position are elaborated and some of their postposed adjectives are expanded into a relative clause. Thus the nominal group (underlined) can be very complex, for example:

> _La distribución social y estilística dentro de una lengua dentro del contexto dado_ _de una comunidad de habla resultaba así un capítulo de la estratificación social de dicha lengua en tal contexto urbano, e implicaba un análisis de la diferenciación y evaluación sociales de las variables lingüísticas._ (SP1.3)

There are three sentences where the subject is not thematic. This may be due to the fact that the structure involves an impersonal verb or due to the fact that the subject is expressed in the rheme. Two of these occurrences with no subject in theme exhibit a modal element in theme:

> _Singularmente, importa señalar aquí la discusión de las contribuciones de B. Lavandera, quien puso de manifiesto la falta de una teoría bien organizada de los significados que permitiera el examen cuantitativo de la variación morfológica, sintáctica y léxica._ (SP1.14)
> _Todavía son escasos los trabajos cuantitativos sobre las variables sintácticas._ (SP1.15)

It is worth pointing out that the modal elements take up the entire thematic structure; this strikes us as being unusual because an experiential constituent commonly occurs in the theme slot and because the majority of the themes in this text are heavily packed with long expansions.

The third of these instances contains a prepositional phrase made up of a preposition and a personal pronoun, whose referent is in the preceding clause;

Los estudios variacionistas sobre las lenguas románicas, y en particular sobre el español del Caribe, no son escasos, y entre ellos destacan especialmente las reglas variables de aspiración y elisión de -(s) en posición implosiva. (8)

This structure was also found in the *ABC* article. It is evident that the prepositional phrase maintains the theme from the previous sentence and it allows the expression of the subject in the rheme. Notice that *destacar* has a presentative value. However, it is the thematic continuation that triggers this wording.

Note the null use of personal pronouns as subjects; there is a clear preference to use a different lexical label to avoid repetition rather than to convey the noun in the pronominal form. As regards objects, there is a single instance of a clitic (*la*) in the theme of 18, which is part of a constant theme chain.

Besides elaborated noun groups some of the themes have further elements in their structures. For example, among the ideational themes, there are three circumstantial adjuncts conveying time pre-posed to the noun head: *Desde la pionera publicación de W. Labov [...], En este momento, En nuestros días.* These circumstantial adjuncts refer to real time and they consist of a preposition (*en, desde*) followed by a determiner (*la, este, nuestros*) and a noun (*publicación, momento, días*); *publicación* is also expanded by a prepositional phrase with *de*.

Other circumstances encode point of departure (*a partir de la significación social y contextual que tienen las variables sociolingüísticas*), for example, which is also expanded by a relative clause.

In addition to circumstantial adjuncts dependent clauses occur in thematic position in four instances: two cases are finite and two are non-finite. Dependent clauses render similar meanings to adjuncts but, as clauses, they can accommodate complements themselves. This results in a vast amount of information being piled up in the theme, which makes the sentence denser and more difficult to decode. For example in 23, the whole dependent clause and the theme of the main clause form the thematic structure:

Aunque las restricciones formales de dicha situación pueden ser superadas en parte, la interpretación y descripción de las distribuciones sociales necesitan una estrategia de observación más directa del interlocutor en el acto mismo de la comunicación (SP1.23)

Aunque las restricciones formales de dicha situación pueden ser superadas en parte,	la interpretación y descripción de las distribuciones sociales

Theme of SP1.23: dependent clause   +   subject of main clause

5.2.2.3 Grammatical Realizations of Interpersonal and Textual Themes

In cases in which more than one element make up the theme, the order is always textual + circumstantial adjunct or dependent clauses + subject; or interpersonal + [subject].

Interpersonal themes found in the text are made up of either a thematised comment (*es posible, estamos de acuerdo*) followed by the subject of the main clause or a modal adjunct (*singularmente, todavía*). As said above, the modal adjuncts (*todavía, singularmente*) take up the entire thematic structure, while thematised comments are followed by the dominant clause. Thematised comments encode the message that what comes afterwards is the opinion of the writer, but there is no engagement with the reader; i.e. no use of personal pronouns referring to either the writer or the reader.

As regards textual themes, thematic elements are realised by conjunctive adjuncts: *con otras palabras, en este sentido, además de, por otra parte, mientras que, asimismo, de modo que;* and by conjunctions: *y, aunque, pero.* This wide range of conjunctive elements contrasts with the relatively low variety and number found in the newspaper articles and in the extract from *Crónica*.

5.2.2.4 Thematic Progression

Ideational themes are related to linguistic variation, specifically to *los estudios de la variación lingüística y de los métodos del análisis cuantitativo* as stated in the rheme of sentence 1; up to sentence 11 themes belong to sociolinguistics, theories in general and publications, but only a minimum part of each theme (often a word) is brought forward from the previous theme(s). This referential element may have been expressed a few sentences back. Thus, the most commonly found thematic pattern is that of derived

themes. A large number of themes that stem from a previous sentence are modified or expanded by determiners, adjectives, circumstantial and relative clauses. For example, in sentence 10 *cuantitativo* refers back to theme (4) but it has been pre-modified by the ordinal *primer: el primer análisis cuantitativo.* Long elaborations of noun group include a part that contains a reference to the general topic or to a specific entity that has been introduced in the rheme of the preceding sentence(s) and parts that contain new information: there are examples in sentences: 4, 6 and 8. In the theme of sentence (2), *El corpus de trabajo que ha surgido de ese texto, ese texto* refers back to part of theme (1): *publicación,* in (2) *ese texto* has been included as anchor of the new theme. The added information ensures that the text is moving forward, but it also creates a high lexical density of textually new information in theme that has an effect on the readability of the text, particularly for non-specialists.

This mechanism of noun characterization by means of elaborations or expansions favours the insertion of textually independent entities in the thematic slot. It also gives the text more dynamism by making the text proceed faster. Similarly, another way of making the text more dynamic is by selecting both the theme and the rheme of the preceding sentence as the theme of the adjacent one; for instance the theme in (7) *dicha posición teórica y metodológica* encompasses the three previous sentences. A further way of contributing to the advancement of the text is by selecting a theme that is inferable from the preceding part of the text; for example, *la monografía* (12) is new in the sense that it has not appeared previously in the text, but it can be textually inferred from the context as a monograph is a type of publication. Although readers need to retrieve the term from their own background knowledge, the writer treats it as old information. This again has the effect of moving the text forward and of making it more informative.

There are three mini chains of two consecutive sentences with constant theme patterns, in which the theme of the first sentence of the pair is carried over to the second sentence. In two out of the three the theme (subject) has been elided. Thus the reader needs to retrieve the theme, which due to the length of the sentences is quite far back in the text. For example, in (18) the coordinate conjunction *y* and the clitic *la* are the only elements in the thematic structure, and the subject part has been carried over from the preceding sentence.

As for simple linear theme patterns, the text contains only a single instance, in sentences 27 and 28. The referent of the subject theme of 28 is the rheme of 27, which is elided fronted to the process *sea* ('is'). This same structure of simple linear theme with '*es*' was also identified in the extract from *Crónica*.

From 19 onwards, each theme contains a textual element and a dependent clause. These serve to establish the local environment for the message contained in the rheme of the dominant clause. None of these sentences conform to any of the progression patterns considered before; the experiential content refers to the general topic but the dependent clauses serve to create the local frame for the message.

The ideational (noun group) themes are then interconnected by means of their lexical referent and by their position in the text. However, specific grammatical markers indicate the explicit connection (referential cohesion) in order to create structural ties between one given sentence and the preceding part of the text: *ese texto*, *dicha publicación*, *su análisis*. In *este texto* and *estas contribuciones*, the demonstrative (underlined) refers anaphorically to the publication mentioned in the previous sentence(s); *dicha posición*: *dicha* also refers anaphorically to the said theory. Possessive adjectives identify the referent through who or what it belongs to: in *su análisis*, *su* refers to the analysis carried out by López Morales.

Pronouns are also used as a referencing mechanism: *entre ellos, la*. The use of the definite article (*el, la, los, las*) is also a way of referencing. Its use, however, does not exclude the occurrence of expansions. Consider, for example, *Los estudios* (8), compared to *un estudio* (30); *los* signals that the reference of *estudios* is made specific, whereas *un estudio* is not.

As far as the adjective placement is concerned, it is worth noticing that on ten occasions the adjective is postposed to the noun, following the trend of adjective placement order in Spanish. However, there are four adjectives pre-modifying the nouns: *gran, primer, dicha* and *primera*. These adjectives are epithets; while postposed adjectives identify the nouns among the class, epithets signal a quality of the noun. It can be argued that *dicho, primer, primera* have a function similar to the demonstrative class because they occur before the noun and they serve to refer to the noun in the same way as a demonstrative does; the only difference being that the demonstrative (and *dicho*) points

to a referent within the text and the preposed adjective can point towards a referent outside the textual environment.

5.2.2.5 Method of Development

The text has two clear parts; the first is mainly made up of ideational themes, which are related to this main topic; in the second part (from sentence 13 onwards) most of the themes contain a textual element besides the experiential theme. Interpersonal themes occur in the middle of the text, marking clear boundaries between the two parts, and towards the end of the text, marking the finishing remarks.

As said above, it is important to consider the ratio of textual themes in relation to the other type of themes; but equally relevant is to identify at what stage in the text the different types of themes occur; this is, the way in which the text develops. This will also give an indication as to the angle taken by the author. The first half of the text contains the least proportion of textual themes: The ratio of textual themes in this first part of the text is of 1 out of 12 (*con otras palabras*); an appositive textual theme, which conveys an explanation. Ideational themes account for the expository function, in this particular case the information (previous work published in the field of sociolinguistics) has been arranged in a chronological fashion. This is achieved mainly, but not only, by circumstantial adjuncts. The first time a circumstantial adjunct appears is at the very beginning of the text and the other two follow at intervals within the first half of the text. This has the effect of framing the content of the text in a time set, which serves as a vital reference for the reader. The lexis of the adjectives (1) *pionera* and (10) *primer* also supports the chronological order signalled by the time circumstantial markers. A further way of marking the chronological organization of the exposition is evident in the range of tenses chosen.

As seen in the analysis of *Crónica* and of the newspaper articles, authors regularly resort to time references as a way of organising the text. Although circumstantial adjuncts convey ideational content they do not belong to the topic specifically, thus they tend to appear together with an experiential theme as a way of framing the message; examples:

(7) en este momento, (11) *en nuestros días.* They are used by writers to establish an internal order within the text. This is evident in the fact that in the first part of the text there are hardly any textual elements; it is the time circumstantial adjunct that contributes largely to mark how the sentences are connected.

A change in the tone of the text is introduced by two interpersonal themes (14) *todavía son escasos los trabajos cuantitativos sobre las variables lingüísticas,* and (15) *singularmente importa señalar aquí.* Modal adjuncts render interpersonal meaning, but what is interesting here is that everything else has been pushed to the rheme, including the subject. There is no link to the preceding part of the text. The chronological thread has been abandoned in order to place the adverbial thematically. The writer has a number of grammatically aceptable choices available: *los trabajos cuantitativos sobre las variables sintácticas todavía son escasos / los trabajos cuantitativos sobre las variables sintácticas son escasos todavía,* for example. These alternatives maintain a similar thematic organization to the one used in the first part of the text and they also keep the given/new order. However, if the subject is expressed preverbally, it takes absolute initial position and therefore weakens the thematic impact of the adjunct. Alternatively, a circumstantial adjunct rendering time in theme would have been congruent with the previous chronological development but it would have meant continuation rather than change. The fact that the adjuncts have been placed thematically is an indication of the change in the text (and of the relevance of the thematic position). It has been said with respect to subject word order (Butt and Benjamin 1994) that certain adverbials[6] favour VS arrangement. The adjunct alone is insufficient to explain the VS order, which is favoured by the thematic development and not by the occurrence of the adverbial. The same adjunct may appear with a fronted subject if the text progresses differently. The change in the tone of the text is consolidated in the subsequent sentence that also contains an interpersonal element *(singularmente).* These two sentences with interpersonal themes define clearly the two parts of the text and accentuate the author's intervention in the text; on the one hand he is expressing an opinion on the amount of research that has been

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[6] See also Ocampo (1995) for a study on the pragmatic factors that intervene in word order arragment in structures involving a verb and an adverb in spoken Spanish.

published and on the other he is selecting a particular piece of work that he wishes to put forward. The chronological fashion has been abandoned in favour of a critical viewpoint.

In the second half of the text, the ratio of textual markers is much higher, 10 out of 16, which serve to make explicit connections between clauses and sentences. Sentence (16) starts with a textual theme showing confirmation of the new approach taken (*en este sentido*). Notice that the ideational theme has been omitted (the work of Beatriz Lavandera) and it must be understood as carried over from rheme (15). This theme extends up to sentence 18, where a heavy textual theme expressing cause has been selected. This sentence expresses the author's concluding remarks regarding differences between phonological and non-phonological variables. The entire paragraph is devoted to these differences, and the sentences within the paragraph are linked by two more textual themes; the first one indicates addition (*además de*), it points out further differences; the last one (*por otra parte*) followed by the concessive clause (*mientras que*) indicates a further difference but from a different angle. The next paragraph (sentences 22-24) begins with an ideational theme (*de estas contribuciones*), which refers back to rheme 14. The textually given element has been pre-modified by *una de las más rigurosas limitaciones*. This is added to the previous criticism, where the 'studies' were thought as being scarce (14); here they are seen in terms of their limitations. This paragraph is completed with a concessive clause as part of the theme and an additive textual theme in order to list all the shortcomings of these studies. Finally, from sentence (25) to (31), the distribution is of three textual to three interpersonal themes; concluding remarks are expected at the end of the text, which explains the high number of interpersonal themes. Textual themes are used to support the author's view by showing cause (*de modo que*), comparison (*asimismo*) or change of direction (*pero*). In comparison with the journalistic texts, where connection was often not made explicit to the reader by textual markers, here the logical relations (cause-effect, consequence, and so forth) are made explicit after the expository section. The views of the author are also made explicit although this is done by thematised comments and modal adjuncts. Straightforward opinions are not included. The ratio of textual markers is denser in those parts where the author is trying to put his argumentation forward to support his claims.

5.2.3 Themes in the English Text (EN1)

5.2.3.1 Theme Content in EN1

Ideational themes in the English text, as is the case in the Spanish, refer to linguistic terms, theories and previous studies and to the sections in the book. This is expected as the text corresponds to the Introduction. Subjects are expressed in theme and are made up mainly of noun groups. The nouns are headed by a definite article (11 cases), or by a demonstrative (1 case); and in 4 cases the noun does not have a pre-determiner. Further, nouns are characterized by an adjective on 7 occasions; equally there are seven occurrences of expansions with prepositional phrases. In most cases, the noun is characterized either by an adjective or by a prepositional phrase, but rarely by both of them. Thus, one obvious difference between the themes in the Spanish text and in the English text is their length. 7 out of 30 themes consist of a noun group that has not been expanded, compared with the Spanish text where all overtly expressed subject themes have been extensively expanded. Moreover, some of the thematic elements in EN1 are identical *the analysis* and *book* are repeated in thematic placement three times, *the study* appears four times; similarly the deictic pronoun *this*, referring to the immediately preceding part of the text, is used twice. The mechanisms employed to mark the cohesion, to make the explicit reference between the thematic sequences and to elaborate the expansions in the nominal groups, are identical. Thus all of the nouns preceded by a definite article, as in the case of the Spanish text, are expanded by means of an adjective (or relative clause) or a prepositional phrase. But shorter themes make the text more reader-friendly in that the amount of information that needs to be processed before the rheme is smaller.

Textual themes are realized by means of conjunctive adjuncts (*first, finally*) or conjunctions (*but* and *and*, predominantly), which means that they are simpler in the sense that the thematic structure is not expanded. There is a single example of complex clause (13); it contains an adversative conjunction (*but*) followed by a conditional clause (*if*) and it ends with a thematised comment (*it is necessary*). Conjunctive adjuncts, *first*

and *finally,* although they are temporal, do not refer to time in the outside world but to the sequences within the text. Similarly, *here* (1) refers to the text rather than to a real spatial location.

5.2.3.2 Thematic Progression and Method of Development

The text advances predominantly by means of the derived thematic progression pattern. Although some key items such as *work, book,* and *analysis* are repeated through the text, there are only two examples of constant thematic change (16 and 17; 20 and 21). There are two cases of summative theme *this,* which encodes the entire preceding message.

The number of textual themes is just over 43% out the total number of entries, these are evenly distributed across the text. The text shows three parts; the first one deals with the general aims of the book; the second part includes specific references to the intended analysis, English language variations and previous theories; the third part states each of the sections of the books with the corresponding contents.

5.2.4 Conclusions

Both texts contain a high number of textual themes, in line with Whittaker's findings, although EN1 has a higher ratio of textual themes than SP1. Textual themes represent over 38% of the total number of themes in SP1 compared to just over 43% in the English text. A noticeable difference is the number of interpersonal themes: there is no a single interpersonal theme in EN1 compared to 5 in SP1. A further difference as regard method of development is the internal structure of the text. While EN1 exhibits textual markers used to connect consecutive sentences within the same paragraph, SP1 makes use of interpersonal themes to separate clearly the expository part from the analytic part. This may be due to the fact that EN1 is the introduction of the whole book, whereas SP1 has been taken from a middle section of the book and it is a self-contained

unit on variation. This means that SP1 contains all the expected parts of a self-contained text, whereas EN1, as the introduction, concentrates more on the current situation, previous studies, general aims and the sections of the book. Moreover, the range of textual markers is more varied in SP1 than in the English text, where textual markers are predominantly the conjunctions *and* and *but*.

Despite these differences, the experiential composite of themes is very similar in both texts. Subjects, with the exception of three cases in the Spanish text, take thematic position; noun groups are expanded, particularly in the SP1; the grammatical structures of the elaborations are the same in both texts, but the elaborations are longer in SP1. This results in a vast amount of information being packed into the theme slot.

Besides noun groups functioning as subjects, circumstantial adjuncts and dependent clauses are also expressed in theme.

In both texts the preferred thematic progression pattern is the derived theme. This means that experiential elements in a given theme are related to the overall topic. There are few chains of both constant thematic theme and summative theme in both texts, but EN1 contains more of them than SP1.

Estudios sobre la variación lingüística (SP1)

(1) Desde la pionera publicación de W. Labov, que fijaba una serie de investigaciones empíricas acerca de la estructura sociolingüística de las comunidades de habla urbanas, un gran progreso se ha verificado dentro de los estudios de la variación lingüística y de los métodos de análisis cuantitativo. (2) El corpus de trabajo que ha surgido de ese texto ha sido crucial en el desarrollo de una teoría sociolingüística estricta, conocida desde entonces como "estudio de la lengua en su contexto social". (3) La distribución social y estilística dentro de una lengua dentro del contexto dado de una comunidad de habla resultaba así un capítulo de la estratificación social de dicha lengua en tal contexto urbano, e implicaba un análisis de la diferenciación y evaluación sociales de las variables lingüísticas.

(4) La noción central del llamado "modelo cuantitativo" es la regla variable, que representa formalmente el efecto combinado del conjunto de factores lingüísticos y sociales que define la variable lingüística. (5) La actuación sociolingüística considera las frecuencias observadas como un reflejo estadístico de un componente probabilístico de la competencia. (6) Con otras palabras, las probabilidades de las reglas variables se han asignado a la competencia sociolingüística y las frecuencias observadas a la actuación. (7) En este momento, dicha posición teórica y metodológica ha sido reforzada por el *Project on Linguistic Change and Variation*, donde se plantean las principales preocupaciones actuales dela encuesta sociolingüística a la vista de la experiencia acumulada en le pasado, y el problema general de extraer conclusiones a propósito del cambio lingüístico en curso. (8) Los estudios variacionistas sobre las lenguas románicas, y en particular sobre el español del Caribe no son escasos, (9) y entre ellos destacan especialmente las reglas variables de aspiración y elisión de -(s) en posición implosiva. (10) El primer análisis cuantitativo fue el de R. Ma y E. Herasimchuk, quienes caracterizaron una muestra de la comunidad de habla puertorriqueña de Jersey City (New Jersey). (11) En nuestros días, la sociolingüística hispánica cuenta ya con la correspondiente aportación. (12) La monografía de H. López Morales sobre San Juan de Puerto Rico constituye una investigación minuciosa de una comunidad de habla urbana y una excelente aportación a los análisis variacionistas de la metodología de regla variable. (13) [ ] Representa, pues, un primer paso – y no pequeño – hacia una descripción sociolingüística del español del Caribe, a través de la comparación de los datos sanjuaneros don los otros estudios variacionistas caribeños.

(14) Todavía son escasos los trabajos cuantitativos sobre las variables sintácticas.
(15) Singularmente, importa señalar aquí la discusión de las contribuciones de B. Lavandera, quien puso de manifiesto la falta de una teoría bien organizada de los significados que permitiera el examen cuantitativo de la variación morfológica, sintáctica y léxica. (16) En este sentido, ha intentado llegar al análisis semántico de la variación sintáctica, a través del desarrollo de una semántica sociolingüística descriptiva que se propone el análisis del significado de la variación paradigmática (sustitución). (17) Su análisis sobre la alternancia de formas verbales en la prótasis de oraciones condicionales del español de Buenos Aires reveló al mismo tiempo una diferencia de significado entre las variaciones postuladas y su acondicionamiento social y estilístico, (18) y la llevó a presentar en una reflexión teórica algunas de las dificultades metodológicas que entrañaba la extensión de la noción de variable sociolingüística a otros niveles no fonológicos.

(19) En efecto, a partir de la significación social y contextual que tienen las variables sociolingüísticas, la primera diferencia entre las variables fonológicas y no fonológicas es que mientras las primeras no necesitan tener significado referencial, las segundas poseen dicho significado. (20) Además de encontrar menos variación sintáctica que fonológica en una variedad determinada y ser más difícil de cuantificar, la variación sintáctica plantea el problema específico de las posibles diferencias de significación que pueden estar asociadas con las variantes, junto a la dificultad. (21) Por otra parte, mientras que el análisis ha mostrado que en muchos casos el

efecto de los factores sociales "externos" (p. ej., etnia, educación, sexo, etc.) sobre la elección de una u otra variante es mínimo, los factores lingüísticos "internos" han resultado de gran interés, y han llegado a asignar un papel central a los estudios pragmáticos, basados en el análisis del discurso.

(22) Una de las más rigurosas limitaciones de muchas de estas contribuciones es el aislamiento de los informantes individuales en el contexto de la entrevista. (23) Aunque las restricciones formales de dicha situación pueden ser superadas en parte, la interpretación y descripción de las distribuciones sociales necesitan una estrategia de observación más directa del interlocutor en el acto mismo de la comunicación. (24) Además el defecto del muestreo aleatorio de entrevistas es que no hay información directa acerca de las retículas sociales que rodean al individuo, ni del criterio de la interacción que conduce al desarrollo del proceso de la variación social y situacional.

(25) Es muy posible que los parámetros últimos del análisis de la variación lingüística no estén en el examen de los factores de diferenciación sociológica como potencialmente relacionados con la variación lingüística (así, p.ej., grupo socioeconómico, edad, sexo, etc.), sino en la propia relación entre retículas sociales, identidad y estrategias comunicativas. (26) De modo que se trata de una posición equidistante entre la etnográfica de la comunicación y el variacionismo, a fin de completar el análisis cualitativo de las variables sociales, y preservar los datos procedentes del individuo y sus relaciones con otro dentro de la misma retícula.

(27) Asimismo, las variaciones parecen caracterizarse más a menudo por la estabilidad que por el cambio, de manera que un estudio – no ya histórico, sino solo concluyente – de cualquier comunidad de habla o sociolecto actual es una tarea de una sociolingüística histórica. (28) Es posible que sea una solución muy radical, (29) pero la conclusión de dar un límite de una a dos generaciones de tiempo real para conformar cualquier cambio en curso (de acuerdo con la observación de Gauchat-Hermann en Charmey, entre otros pocos casos), parece muy relativa, simple e insuficiente, puesto que no está implicada en una variable generacional (y a veces ni ésta). (30) Estamos de acuerdo en que un estudio de la dimensión dinámica de la estructura sincrónica puede comprender y explicar muchas cosas, (31) y que buena parte del pasado se puede reconstruir a partir del presente, sobre todo si lo examinamos con profundidad y meticulosidad.

Introduction (EN1)

(1) The work described here was motivated by the belief that variation is an inherent characteristic of natural language, and that a full understanding of language must include an understanding of the nature and the function of variation. (2) The aim of the book is to analyse some of the linguistic and sociolinguistic variation that occurs in natural, spontaneous, everyday speech. (3) This means that its chief contribution is, perhaps, to the study of language in its social context; (4) but the results of the analysis have theoretical implications for both synchronic and diachronic linguistics.

(5) Any variety of English (or, indeed, of any language) could provide data for the analysis of variation; (6) the non standard regional and social varieties, however, are particularly suitable for this kind of study, since most non-standard linguistic features occur variably in contemporary English, alternating in occurrence with the corresponding standard English forms. (7) The analysis in this study, therefore, will be based on natural conversational interaction between speakers of a non-standard variety of English – the variety spoken in the town of Reading, in Berkshire.

(8) The relationship that exists between the socioeconomic status of speakers and their use of nonstandard variable forms has been well documented, (9) and no attempt will be made to

replicate these findings here. (10) Instead, the analysis focuses on speakers of a single socio-economic class (the working class), in an attempt to gain insight into the subtle aspects of variation.

(11) Most previous studies have dealt with phonological variation, (12) and there are many practical advantages in this. (13) But if we are to further our understanding of language, it is necessary to extend the analysis of variation beyond this level, (14) and for this reason the study will be concerned with morphological and syntactic variation. (15) This means that it will also provide a valid description of the morphological and syntactic differences between standard English and a variety of English used by working-class speakers - a description which is long overdue. (16) Speculative theories about the differences between the language of working-class speakers and that of middle class speakers have been given credence in educational circles, (17) but these theories have rarely been based on empirical analysis of real language. (18) Rosen (1972: 14), for example, makes the following point: (19) it cannot be repeated too often that, for all Bernstein's work, we know little about working-class language.'

(20) By focusing on a nonstandard variety of English, the study will also make a contribution to the field of dialectology.

(21) Part I of the book discusses the methodology that is involved in making observations of natural everyday interaction. (22) It outlines the fieldwork procedures that were used in this study, (23) and describes some of the social characteristics of the speakers, as well as the adventure playgrounds where most of the data were collected. (24) The main linguistic analysis is given in part II. (25) Linguistic variation is analysed from two interacting points of view: the extent to which speakers fluctuate between the nonstandard form of a variable and the corresponding standard English form; and the extent to which their fluctuation is affected by the immediate linguistic environment of the variable. (26) Where relevant, the relationship between variation and language change will be explored. (27) Part III analyses sociolinguistic variation, again from two interacting points of view. (28) First, the ways in which different groups of speakers use the non-standard forms are analysed, in order to establish the social significance of the different linguistic variables; (29) next, the way in which individual speakers use the nonstandard forms are investigated, in an attempt to understand the ways in which speakers are able to exploit the resources of the language system to convey social meaning. (30) Finally, the main theoretical implications of the study are discussed in the Conclusion.

5.3 Theme Analysis of Spoken Spanish

5.3.1 Introduction

Spoken language has gained considerable attention in recent years in comparison with the relatively small part that speech has traditionally played in linguistic studies in Spanish. Besides the part played by the technological advances, one of the reasons favouring this shift is the realisation that spoken language presents different features from written language. As regards word order, variations from the prototypical SVO order have frequently been associated with spoken varieties of language.

It is important to reiterate here that SVO has been considered the prototypical or normal word order, in that speakers will select SVO order primarily. When word order presents variations from this alignment such as VS or OV, these variations are considered as 'inverted word order' (Silva-Corvalán 1983) and therefore 'alterations', which require certain explanation. Speakers must have a motivation to choose that marked word order. This implies that the syntactic structure has been considered as the factor to measure or describe word order. The analysis of the written texts (sections 3, 5.1, and 5.2) supports this alignment. It emerged that in those types of text there are fewer differences with respect to word order between English and Spanish than originally anticipated.

Any spoken variety of language shows obvious distinct factors intervening in the communication process such as prosodic features. Butt and Benjamin (1994) claim that Spanish makes less use of intonation and stress than English; this fact then explains the fact that Spanish resorts to word order 'alterations' to mark out the topic. A similar view is taken by López Meirama (2006), she argues that intonation is not enough to discern the (marked) focus, which needs to be supported by marked word order. In contrast, Silva-Corvalán (1983) states that word order 'alterations' of the OVX kind are possible because of the intonation pattern of declarative sentences in Spanish. Further, she distinguishes different intonation patterns for OVX wording, which produce different pragmatic meaning. Ocampo (1990) with regard to Subject position also argues for a correlation between word order and pragmatic function on the one hand, and a correlation between pragmatic function and stress on the other.

These two opposed views illustrate that although it is clear that prosodic features are an inherent factor in speech, their significance in meaning has not been determined yet.

The main motivation here for studying spoken data is to compare findings with the results obtained from the analysis of written registers. In order to be able to make a valid comparison, the same type of analysis must be undertaken. Further, thematic analysis has proven to be an optimal tool in discerning features according to variables such as register (field, tenor, and mode) and genre. Brown and Yule (1983: 141) argue that in spoken English the thematisation of 'I' and 'You' respond to the fact that the main concern in speech may be the interaction among the speakers. Since theme content is sensitive to discourse pressure due to register and purpose, the application of the same analytical model to spoken variety of language should offer equally compelling results. Moreover, in order to establish a valid comparison between the written and spoken register, comparative parameters must be kept alike. Therefore prosodic features are overlooked in both the transcripts and the theme analysis of the spoken data. It is anticipated that the analysis will lead to different results than those found in the analysis of written texts because of the differences in register and purpose. It is possible that some of the variations to be found might have a correlation with prosodic features; and whilst this would be an interesting subject for further research, this is not the scope of the present study.

5.3.2 The Data

The data consist of approximately an hour of recordings of an informal conversation among four speakers and myself. The informants converse about the television programmes, films and books that they have watched or read recently.

I have divided the conversation into three extracts for the purpose of the analysis according to the subject matter: extract 1: television programmes; extract 2: books; and extract 3: films. The analysis follows the same methodological principles applied in the

thematic analysis of written texts. Thus, thematic material, formal realization of the thematic content and thematic progression are considered.

5.3.3 Thematic Content and Word Order in Spoken Spanish

Speakers:
EV: Eva
C: Caridad
EN : Encarna
M: Madre
S: Solbella

Extract 1

Transcript:

1. EV - <u>A mí</u> Betty la fea. <u>Yo</u> veo Betty la fea. Llego a las cinco, mientras estoy comiendo la veo. Versión española.
2. C - <u>yo la</u> veo los viernes porque como trabajo lejos la veo los viernes.
3. C - Y <u>tú</u> no la ves, Encarna?.
4. EN - no. ..<u>Es que</u> veo Friends. <u>Que no le</u> gusta a mi madre.
5. EV - y <u>¿en cuál</u> echan esa?.
6. EN - en la cuatro.
7. EV - Y <u>¿a qué hora</u> echan eso? <u>Yo eso no lo</u> he visto nunca.
8. EN - a las 3.30.
9. M - <u>cuando yo</u> estoy viendo la novela.
10. EN - <u>yo ya lo</u> he visto veinte veces.
11. M - <u>y</u> son siempre los mismos, los mismos capítulos.
(Theme has been underlined.)

Informants were asked about what television programmes they like to watch. EV initiates the conversation talking about the television programme she follows currently. She starts by saying that she [likes] Ugly Betty (*A mí Betty la fea*), which she watches whilst having lunch; informant C follows explaining when and why she watches that programme (*yo lo veo los viernes*); lastly, informant EN, after a prompt by EV, intervenes bringing a different programme into the conversation: 'Friends' (*es que veo Friends*). At this point the conversation switches the focus from 'Ugly Betty' to 'Friends' and from this point onwards it is centred on 'Friends'.

At first glance, a thematic analysis shows that the theme slot is occupied mainly by pronouns, ranging from personal pronouns (*a mí, yo, tú,*) and clitic pronouns (*la, lo*) to

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deictic (*eso*); in interrogative sentences, themes are relative pronouns and a relative adjective followed by the corresponding noun (*y en cuál / y a qué hora*); four clauses have the conjunction *y,* and *cuando* occurs in theme once. The most recurrent theme is the personal pronoun in the first person (*yo*), which appears overtly expressed mainly in absolute initial position, except in one case where it is preceded by the conjunction *cuando*. Once the personal pronoun has been expressed at the beginning of each speaker's utterance, it appears to be consistently omitted (*llego, veo, trabajo*) in the remainder of the statement. This omission of the personal pronoun has been explained as a pro-drop movement on the basis that the verb endings of *veo, estoy viendo* and *he visto* present no ambiguity regarding their referent, i.e. *yo* (I), and that *yo* (I) is always identified with the person speaking; therefore the personal pronoun is semantically (experientially) and syntactically redundant and therefore it can be omitted; this is indeed the case in the rest of the utterance. This indicates that the meaning conveyed by the pronoun at the start of each speaker utterance is not experiential or syntactic but interactional. That is, the personal pronoun is required in as far as it codes interpersonal value. The expression of the pronoun signals the change of turn as the different speakers intervene. Speaker EV starts by expressing her preference for 'Ugly Betty', saying that she watches it in the afternoons while having lunch. Speaker C's intervention continues with the same programme 'Ugly Betty' (*yo lo*), she explains why she watches on Fridays. It seems clear that what they are talking about is the television programmes, yet the conversation is also about themselves but only in as far as the television programmes are concerned. Despite the fact that *yo* is the subject and strictly speaking belongs to the experiential realm, it is functioning here as an interpersonal theme. It has a meaning along the lines of 'as far as I am concerned', 'what I have to say about that programme'. Therefore the personal pronoun is functioning as a marker to establish the turn in that it points to the speaker talking, almost as a deictic. This is why, once a speaker initiates her intervention, the subject theme *yo* tends to be omitted in the rest of the intervention by the same speaker.

Notice that in 3, despite the fact that it is a question, it starts with the copulative conjunction *y,* which expresses continuation 'I am still going on about the same thing';

the conjunction *y* is followed by the personal pronoun subject *tú* and by the vocative (interpersonal theme) Encarna.

Further examples of the thematic placement of the personal pronoun subject in questions are found in Extract 2: Three of the informants are discussing books, which they are currently reading.

Extract 2:

Transcript

1. EV - Estoy leyendo ahora la de la princesa...
2. C - yo la del 'Diablo se viste de Prada'.
3. EC – oi!, ese estás leyendo pues si ese es una peli
4. C - ya lo sé pero lo estoy leyendo- hay un libro
5. EC - Eso estaba arriba el libro, ¿no?
6. C - ah no sé, a mi me lo ha dejado mi cuñado
7. EN - o al revés
8. C - estoy leyendo el libro [pause] primero se escribiría el libro y luego se hizo la película
9. C - Es muy divertido te ríes mucho, es muy estresante
10. EN -¿Tú no has visto la película?
11. EN -Yo no me gustó mucho
12. EN - ¿Y yo qué estoy leyendo? Pues tengo dos empezados
13. EV - 'La piedra en el corazón' estás leyendo.
14. EN - Sí, es de uno que se llama Luis Diez. Es que ese libro me lo regaló Cristinita porque estuvimos en el congreso de literatura y vino ese escritor y me gustó mucho como hablaba y me lo regaló. Ya me lo he empezado tres veces y como me quedo dormida leyendo...

EN's first question (*¿Tú no has visto la película?*) contains the subject in initial position in order to maintain clarity in how the interaction proceeds by moving from one speaker to the other(s). This is also evident in 12 when EN asks herself a question to fast track her own intervention; it is a way of advancing her own turn. This rhetorical question also starts with the personal pronoun subject *yo* altering what is considered the default order of questions (VS). Additionally, in the structure containing the verb *gustar*, where the grammatical form required is an IO *a mí*, the personal pronoun subject *yo* has replaced the indirect object *a mí*. This can be explained as an attraction carried out by the second person of the personal pronoun *tú*, which drags the nominative form *yo* to impose it on the IO form *a mí*. This attraction has the effect of maintaining the flow of interaction

between the speakers: *tú* and *yo*. This use of the personal pronoun subject must be understood in the context of the dialogue exchange as a device to establish, maintain and continue the interaction; once the speaker has established her turn the personal pronoun subject is omitted. This means that the personal pronoun subject theme mainly encodes interpersonal meaning; it also contributes to creation of texture, which is largely the interaction in a dialogue setting. Often the presence of the subject pronoun has been explained as emphatic or contrastive but this analysis shows that its interactive weight motivates the overt expression of the personal pronoun in thematic position (the experiential meaning is encoded in the verb ending). The subject theme is then omitted until there is a change in theme. In this respect, it behaves like a full lexical subject in a constant theme chain. This explains why in two-people conversations the use of the pronouns may be less frequent, because each speaker turn is clear from the situation.

Halliday (1994) claims that all personal pronouns have evolved from an original (external) deictic meaning. From that original sense they gradually started to designate the category of person and 'the first and the second person *I* and *you* naturally retain this deictic sense' (1994: 312). He adds that the third person also maintains part of the deictic meaning but only anaphoric (backwards). In Spanish the third person is hardly ever used with a deictic sense, instead a deictic pronoun, an adjective or a synonym are used.

There is an instance, nonetheless, where the personal pronoun (*yo*) has been omitted at the start of a speaker intervention. In 4 EN replies to EV's question with *es que veo Friends* ('because [I] watch Friends'). The counterpart with the explicit pronoun (*es que yo veo Friends*) would have equally fitted in this sequence, where the overt expression of *yo* indicates, as seen above, the change of speaker's turn. It is worth noticing that speaker EN is responding to a question. This means that her turn has been granted by the question and that the use of the personal pronoun is therefore unnecessary; that is, the question has taken the function of marking the speaker's intervention. The theme is made up of the conjunctive *es que,* which has an explanatory meaning 'because' and is often used instead of *porque*; it can also have an apologetic connotation. EN chooses to start her statement with *es que veo Friends que no le gusta a mi madre* ('which my mother doesn't like'). A change of television programme is signaled by the textual markers *es que*, which is followed by the relative pronoun *que* in theme; 'my

mother' is expressed in final position. *Que* is referring to Friends, which has just been introduced in the previous rheme; my mother, on the other hand, appears in the conversation for the first time. This word order keeps the SVO and shows progression by selecting as theme of the clause the rheme of the previous one (simple linear theme in Daneš' (1974) terms). However, it can be argued that 'my mother' has a clear referent and can be easily treated as inferable information; moreover, expressing my mother in preverbal (thematic) position would have been expected since the *gustar* type of verbs commonly selects the object in preverbal position. It could even have been replaced by a pronoun (*a ti*), since EN's mother is present and partaking in the conversation. The use of *a ti* encodes the same interactional and deictic function as the rest of the personal pronouns seen above. It is a direct allusion, which includes her mother in the interaction, whereas the use of the third person 'my mother' excludes her from the interaction. This is further evidence of the interpersonal meaning encoded by the personal pronouns of the first and second person. The expressing of 'my mother' in theme involves a change in theme; expressing my mother as theme with a referential personal pronoun (*a ti*) clearly opens up the interaction between EN and her mother.

The (grammatically and commonly used) alternatives suggest that Speaker EN has opted for both the omission of the personal pronoun *yo* in the first clause and for the expression of *mi madre* (instead of *a ti*) in the rheme in the second clause; this arrangement has broken the possible parallel construction of the two consecutive themes *yo* and *mi madre/ a ti*. This parallel construction has a contrasting meaning between 'I' and 'my mother'; i.e. 'I watch it, my mother does not like it'. This contrast can be understood as a confrontation given that in a mother and daughter relationship the daughter seeks her mother's approval. If the approval is not granted then a tension between the daughter and the mother can be created. This reading is coherent with the expression of the apologetic *es que*, which also contributes to soften that possible tension: 'I watch it despite my mother's view but I'm not proud of it'. This disagreement between the taste of mother and daughter can be seen more clearly when four lines down, the mother intervenes in response to a question enquiring at what time 'Friends' is on. EN replies at 3.30, the mother also replies: *cuando yo estoy viendo la novela* ('when I am watching the soap'); the personal pronoun subject *yo* is expressed after *cuando*, the

mother seems unhappy about the fact that Friends comes on at the same time as the soap she watches is on, and we can only guess that EN changes the channel to watch 'Friends'. It is worth pointing out the effect caused by removing the subject from the theme: *cuando estoy viendo la novela*. The theme is then solely occupied by *cuando*, which serve to connect this clause with the question *¿a qué hora echan eso?* The rheme *estoy viendo la novela* is the time referent of *cuando*. In *cuando yo estoy viendo la novela*, both *yo* and *cuando* are the theme. The expression of the subject in the theme conveys the irritation of the mother. The last statement uttered by the mother further clarifies her frustration; 'they are always the same, the same episodes'. But the irritation can be expressed by placing special prosodic emphasis on the predicate: *cuando **estoy viendo** la novela*; the expression of the subject pronoun in theme is a clear attempt on part of the mother to bring herseld into the interaction.

Arguably, there is always a potential contrast embedded in any ideational element, which has been selected as theme. This contrast in more or less marked depending on how restricted is the number of members to be contrasted. For instance, in *I* compared to *anybody else* the contrast is more tenuous than in *I* compared to *You*. But the contrastive meaning is usually coded by other lexicogrammatical features, which enable us to infer such meaning. It must be noted here that the pronoun *yo* is not uttered with special emphasis or stress.

The second most common thematic elements are clitic and demonstrative pronouns (*la, lo; eso, esa*), rendering the subject matter of the conversation. For example, in the opening sentence of extract 1, the soap *Betty la fea* has been introduced, then it has been replaced by the clitic pronoun *la* (twice) in the subsequent sentences; in 4, the series 'Friends' has been introduced in rhematic position first, subsequently it is recovered by the deictic *esa, eso*, and the clitic *lo*. Since the clitic pronouns have a fairly fixed position within the sentence immediately before the main verb (or postponed attached to the finite verb), the thematic role is relatively weak; however, the choice rests on the expression of the object as a clitic or as the lexicalised item. The latter can be expressed either in the theme with the clitic reduplication or in the rheme without the reduplication. It is worth noting that the theme is frequently made up of the subject and the DO, clitic or deictic; the referential DO is rarely the only element in theme. This means that the thematic

progression is carried out by the subject and not by the referential object. For the DO to carry the thematic progression it must occur as a full lexical item. The referential DOs are used by speakers to refer to an element previously mentioned; their use signals that they are talking about the same topic. It is worth considering how both the clitics and the deictic are used referentially. It appears that in statements the clicits are used to refer to the subject matter but in demands the deictic functioning as subject is often used to make the link to the particular programme or book. In wh-questions, the theme is the question word (in yes/no questions the theme may be empty); this means that the theme is lexically detached from the preceding part of the conversation. It seems that in these cases the link between the question and the referred programme needs to be made stronger. The cohesion is maintained by the use of the referential (*esa, eso, lo*) and textually by the use of the conjunctive *y* fronted to the question word; that is, the conjunction *y* also indicates that the utterances are about the same programme, as in the following examples:

Extr.1   5. - *y ¿en cuál echan esa?*
       7. - *Y ¿a qué hora echan eso?*

The theme in questions leads us to turn the focus on the responses. As said above, the ideational theme (or part of the theme) can be omitted on the grounds that it is embedded in the grammatical form of the verb ending, as in 1: *Llego a las cinco, mientras estoy comiendo la veo. Versión española*; provided that the identity of the speaker is known. The theme can also be omitted because it is textually given and the speaker expects the listener to fill in the theme slot with the relevant missing element as in 6 and 8:

Extr.1   5. - *y ¿en cuál echan esa?*
       6. - *en la cuatro*
       7. - *Y ¿a qué hora echan eso? Yo eso no lo he visto nunca*
       8. - *a las 3.30*

The listener can easily recall the missing part of the sentence by retrieving it from the question:

      [Esa la echan] en la cuatro
      [Eso lo echan] a las 3.30.

It was noted in the analysis of written texts that in simple linear thematic patterns the theme of the second clause can be omitted. The contiguity between the rheme and the new theme favours this omission. This thematic progression pattern is the pattern that prevails in questions and answers.

> *- ¿y en cuál echan esa?*
> *- [esa la echan] en la cuatro*

In this example not only the theme but also the part of the question that overlaps with the answer has been omitted in the answer. The question and its answer form a mirror image; the answer begins where the question finishes. The proximity between the end of one and the beginning of the other favours the omission. Thus, it could be claimed that this pattern is the default wording for answers to questions.

However, the simple linear pattern can be altered. Consider, for example,

Extr.2 12. EN - *¿Y yo qué estoy leyendo? Pues tengo dos empezados*
          13. EV - *'La piedra en el corazón' estás leyendo.*

The response in 13 has maintained the same order as the question, i.e. the requested item is expressed first. The relationship between the two sentences is isomorphic, or a case of constant thematic progression pattern. EN's question is unusual in that she is not expecting an answer because she herself is willing to provide it; that is, she is the one who knows the answer. In this respect, EV's answer is also unexpected; the question was not meant to be replied to, at least not by somebody other than EN. This needs to be corroborated with larger amount of data, but it seems that the constant theme pattern is the marked word order for answers to questions.

As said earlier, occurrences of simple linear patterns were found in written texts but they were by far the least represented pattern in all of the text types studied. The referent of empty theme slot in statements may not be so obvious for purposes of analysis, but it poses no problems for the addressee. For example in 11, the theme contains only a textual element *y*, which expresses continuation: *y son siempre los mismos, los mismos capítulos*. In the preceding part of the conversation there is no referent of *los mismos*, in fact the referent is made explicit in an apposition in the rheme. The listener is expected to fill the gap between the series 'Friends' and the fact that it is divided into episodes. The episodes are the referent, which is missing in the theme slot as

experiential content. This is why *los mismos capítulos* is added at the end because the speaker probably realises that it may be difficult to understand or simply because after the point is made she feels she has time to provide the anchor she missed out before.

Further, it may be the case that empty theme has a reference in the previous part of the exchange, but this is not so obvious to the analyst because it is not the subject. One of these instances is illustrated in Extract 2:

> 14. EN - *Sí, es de uno que se llama Luis Diez. Es que ese libro me lo regaló Cristinita porque estuvimos en el congreso de literatura y vino ese escritor y me gustó mucho como hablaba y me lo regaló. Ya me lo he empezado tres veces y como me quedo dormida leyendo...*

EN acknowledges EV's intervention and provides the name of the author of the novel: *Sí, [ese libro]es de uno que se llama Luis Diez*. Then she continues with the same theme but it is reintroduced again (*ese libro*) together with a textual element (*es que*) in order to signal the re-start, expanding on the reason why she is reading that particular book. The theme slot is occupied by explanatory expression *es que*, the ideational theme established in the previous utterance, *ese libro*, with the corresponding clitic reduplication *lo* and the IO *me*. *Ese libro* (ideational theme) recovers the theme of the sentence and *es que* (textual theme) underlines the fact that there is a reason, a little story worth telling surrounding the book. A new participant Cristinita is introduced in the rheme despite being the subject of the sentence: *Es que ese libro me lo regaló Cristinita*. It is also worth noting, however, that *Cristinita* as a proper name is presented (and must be understood) as known information; this is important to illustrate how the degree of givenness of an item is independent of its communicative potential. In this case the point of the clause, the new information, is the fact that Cristinita gave the book as a present to EN; that is, the news comes from the combination of both 'give' and Cristinita. Then she is included in the rheme of following clause by means of the verb ending of first person plural *estuvimos* (we went); both Cristinita and Encarna attended the literary congress. This wording corresponds to a simple linear pattern. In the subsequent clause the author is reintroduced (*ese escritor)* in the rheme. *Ese escritor* is the subject of the verb *vino* and is not textually new, as the anaphoric deictic *ese* indicates (his full name was given previously); yet it has been placed in the rheme. This type of binary clause with intransitive verbs has attracted considerable attention among researchers because they show a high frequency

of VS order. Apart from the type of verb criterion, another reason adduced to explain the VS order is the old + new principle, which as just seen here fails to offer an infallible explanation. The theme slot in *y vino ese escritor* is overtly occupied by the conjunction *y* (textual theme), which expresses continuation but the theme lacks any referential meaning. Since the subject appears in the rheme, there is no obvious missing candidate to occupy the theme, which could be seen as carried over from the previous clause(s). Empty themes are typically carried over from the previous clause either from the theme or from the rheme. But the previous theme subject ([*nosotras*/ we]) does not fit in. The next possible candidate is the adjunct *congreso* in the preceding rheme; the meaning expressed by the circumstantial adjunct (to the conference) is congruent with the meaning of the process (attend*)*. This proximity between the adjunct in the preceding rheme and the adjunct in the new theme, and the actual meaning of *venir* can justify the omission of the circumstantial adjunct in the new theme. In other words, the progression between the two clauses is carried out by a simple linear pattern of thematic progression. The fact that the empty theme is not the subject makes the pattern less apparent. Notice that from *es que ese libro*, the simple linear pattern has been followed: *ese libro* → Cristinita / [Cristinita and I = we] → to the conference / [to the conference] → came the writer. At this point the story could have continued with the writer as the new theme but it went back to EN in theme (me): *y me gustó mucho como hablaba*. It was seen in sections 3 and 5.1 that human participants tend to be expressed as subjects in thematic position in chains of constant themes. In 14 we have seen that in a chain of simple linear theme the theme comes from the rheme of the preceding clause regardless of the nature or characteristic of that element.

Simple linear theme pattern is the most listener (and reader) friendly kind in that the theme comes from the immediate co-text; thus, the listener needs to concentrate exclusively on the rheme. That is, only the rheme of the clause is used to foreground information. In extract 3 there is a further example, which helps to illustrate this type of VS arrangement. But before leaving extract 2, attention to the preverbal position of the DO is due.

EN's intervention stems from EV's reply:

Extr.2 13. EV - *'La piedra en el corazón' estás leyendo.*
        14. EN - *Sí, es de uno que se llama Luis Diez. Es que ese libro me lo regaló Cristinita*

In her first utterance, the subject theme (the book) is elided, this is explained as theme continuation (constant theme) from previous clause. The book is also the subject theme of the following one, but it is overtly expressed. The re-introduction of a theme subject in a chain of more that two consecutive clauses were also observed in written texts. The theme is most commonly the subject, but in this case it happens to be the object; it has been expressed as part of the chain of the constant theme; that is, it has been re-introduced because it is the theme and not because it is the object.

Extract 3

Transcript:

1. EV - <u>Yo es que al cine</u> hace años que no voy con el digital ... <u>nosotros nos</u> esperamos a que llegue al video-club <u>luego la</u> cogemos la peli en el video-club y ya esta
2. C - ¿<u>Cuál</u>?
3. EV - <u>La última que hemos visto</u> la del 'Código Da Vinci'
4. EN - <u>pues yo</u> fui a ver un día la del 'diablo se viste de Prada'
5. C - ¿Sí?
6. EN - <u>pues al día siguiente</u> fui a ver el 'Laberinto del Fauno'. <u>Y me</u> gustó muchísimo esa película, sobre la guerra civil
[S - <u>esa la</u> echan allí]
7. EN - <u>pues</u> está genial
[ ]
8. EN - <u>Si, si</u> está ... estaba nominada para los Oscars <u>a mí me</u> gustó más que la de 'Volver', ¿eh?
9. EV - <u>La de 'Volver'</u> está muy bien también
10. EN - <u>pero</u> está mejor, <u>a mí me</u> gustó más esa película que la de 'Volver'
[ ]
11. EN - <u>y luego</u> la de 'Salvador', que la vi también al día siguiente
12. EV - <u>esa no la</u> he visto yo
[ ]
13. EN - <u>pues esa se</u> llama así 'Salvador', <u>Salvador</u> es el chico. <u>La policía lo</u> coge, es anarquista <u>y lo</u> acusan de haber matado a un policía. <u>Y al final, que fue cuando muere Franco,</u> es ejecutado

In the last part EN explains the plot of one of the latest movies she has been to see.

In the last sentence *Y al final, que fue cuando muere Franco, es ejecutado*, the relative clause *que fue cuando muere Franco* has an embedded temporal clause with VS order. The theme of the main clause is the textual *y*, the circumstantial adjunct *al final [...]*, and the subject *Salvador* is omitted, carried over from the previous sentence. *Al final,* which refers to the end of the movie, is expanded by a relative clause, *que fue*

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cuando muere Franco; its function is to provide a historical backdrop for the end of the movie, *que fue cuando muere Franco.* The whole relative clause is intended to add a time/historical referent to *al final*; this is encapsulated in the use of *cuando* as the only element in the theme of the dependent clause <u>*cuando*</u> *muere Franco.* Compared with *y al final, que fue cuando Franco muere,* this wording suggests that at the end of the movie Franco dies. The original means that at the end Salvador is executed; his death coincides with Franco's death.

5.3.4 Conclusions

These short extracts show that personal pronoun subjects (first and second person) occur overtly expressed in theme. The experiential meaning encoded by the personal pronoun is expressed in the morphology of the verb; however they are expressed at the start of each speaker's utterance in conversation in order to mark the interaction clearly. Thus the personal pronoun subjects (first and second person) have a deictic function in the interaction; therefore where the question itself identifies the speaker's turn, they are not expressed in response to questions. Once a given speaker has established her turn, the subject theme is omitted in the rest of her intervention in chains of constant theme. In this sense, personal pronoun subjects behave as full lexicalised subjects; the difference stems from the fact that full lexical subjects code experiential meaning and personal pronouns code mainly interpersonal value.

The second most common thematic element is objects realized referentially, as clitics and deictics mainly. The extracts contain only a single example of a full lexical object in theme.

As regards thematic progression patterns, two patterns were identified: constant theme and simple linear theme. The former occurs mostly in relatively short statements, which contain factual exchange information. Simple linear theme occurs in stretches where the speaker engages in a short narration, for example, EN relates the anecdote of how she obtained the last book she is reading. It was also noted that this pattern is the common pattern observed in responses to questions. An alternative wording for responses

was also found, in which the answer maintains the same wording as the question; that is, the reply starts from the same constituent as the question: the requested information followed by the rest of the clause.

In comparison with written texts, conversational Spanish seems to make more use of simple linear theme patterns. This may be due to the fact that it contains questions. Moreover, this pattern is the less communicative in that only the rheme conveys new information. This may explain why it is less frequent in writing than in speech. In this respect, it was also noted that clauses is the extracts analysed were considerably shorter than in the written texts, which in Spanish exhibit long and complex sentences.

These findings will be used in section 7 to compile suggestions for teachers and learners of Spanish as a foreign language.

6. Analysis of Students' Work Samples

6.1 Introduction

Having examined the thematic options that appear in the theme in a Spanish academic text (SP1), this section is intended to study texts produced by students of Advanced Spanish courses. As explained in the previous sections, theme (initial position) plays a key role in the text construal by making it move forward cohesively (thematic progression) and by providing an overall frame in which to organize the information (method of development). Given that English is perceived as making use of initial position for different purposes than Spanish, we can anticipate that the students' choices of theme will be so affected. The thematic analysis of students' work will reveal the effects that material placed in initial position has in the overall success of their writing. Further, the analysis will expose the specific features that prevent a piece of work from being more effective.

The main objective of this analysis is to identify the thematic choices made by students in order to compare them with those found in the academic texts previously analysed. The thematic comparison will assist in identifying problematic areas at more than one level. First, it will show the thematic content that has been selected and its suitability to the type of text; second, it will highlight the ratio and range of theme types and their occurrence at a given stage in the text, in Fries' terminology, the method of development; third, the analysis of thematic progression will provide specific information with respect to lexicogrammatical features used to create cohesion (or lack of it) in the text. Finally, the analysis will assist in identifying the level of linguistic ability and the lexical knowledge of the student concerned. Although this last aspect is not the central focus here, information obtained can be used to assess the correlation between learners' competence at the syntactic and lexical levels and their competence at writing.

Findings will be used to identify the specific problematic areas commonly occurring; these will help to draw attention to those linguistic features that are required to address the identified problems. Therefore, results will be used to compile a list of aspects that could be taken into account in teaching and assessing. This list, however, is

by no means exhaustive and language instructors are encouraged to use theme analysis to further uncover specific problems that individual learners may have.

6.2 The Data

Selection of data has been undertaken amongst two groups of learners studying the same course under a solely criterion of common easy topic themes. I have chosen five essays on two of the prescribed topics set by examination boards: 'Environmental issues in Spain or other Spanish speaking country' (*El medioambiente*) and 'Immigration' (*La situación de la inmigración en España*); in order to protect students' identity they will be referred to by their initials, C, L, R and B, respectively. One of the essays on *La situación del medioambiente en España* has been written by student C and the other two have been written by student L (hence L1 and L2). The two essays on *La inmigración* are the work of students R and B.

The selected samples are intended as a focus group for both the technique involved in studying essays and the type of information that can be obtained from applying such an approach. Grammatical errors, which come under the accuracy category in the examination board mark scheme, have been overlooked in the current analysis in the belief that grammatical errors tend to be more apparent and easier to be identified; nonetheless, thematic study can be equally informative on the level of grammatical competence of learners.

A complete exact typed version of each text can be found in appendixes at the end of this section (p. 148)

Theme choices (of T-units) of the five texts are presented in five tables identified by type of theme. Ideational themes are presented in two columns: the first column includes non-subjects and the second one contains subjects in themes. Squared brackets [] indicate a theme, which is not overtly expressed. The tables provide a first visual indication of the amount and the type of information selected in the thematic structure. It also indicates the stage at which different theme types appear.

6.3 Student C

Table of themes

NO	Textual	Interpersonal	Ideational
1		es evidente que	Con respecto a la situación del medio ambiente en Espana los incendios forestales
2			[esto]
3		Es muy duro	Cuando incendios forestales ocurren
4	y		[incendios forestales]
5			en muchos casos los que sufren de los incendios forestales
6			[Los incendios forestales]
7			[Ø]
8		Es evidente que	todas estas cosas
9	y		[todas estas cosas]
10			[existential verb 'hay']
11		Enmiopinión personal yo pienso que	el estado
12			Si el público no puede mantener un ambiente limpio la situación
13	También		[Ø]
14			cuando no es el lugar de vivir de ellos,
15		pienso que	Para concluir personas que están en España

Thematic elements: Table 1

By looking at theme choices it is possible to assess if the work done focuses on issues pertinent to the essay title and if all the relevant aspects that are required have been addressed. The choice of ideational themes enables us to determine the relevance of the information content included in the essay in the light of the essay title. Themes include references to the environment (*el medioambiente*), particularly to forest fires (*los incendios forestales*), which are explicitly mentioned three times; there are references to people in general (*el público, personas que están en España*) and to the government (*el gobierno*). Student C's thematic choices reveal that the aspect included is relevant but the focus is mainly on one aspect.

A further aspect to be considered is the degree of congruency between theme content and their grammatical realizations. Themes are grammatically realized as follow:

Noun groups

Prepositional phrases

Thematised comments

Personal projected clauses

Dependent clauses

Conjunctive adjuncts

Conjunctions

Noun groups function as subjects. They are determined by definite articles in some instances (*los incendios forestales, el estado, la situación*), however, the plural definite article is missing in two occasions: *cuando [los] incendios forestales ocurren*, and *[las] personas que están en España*. This indicates a particular weakness, which can be caused due to the interference of English that can have plural nouns without determiner. Other characterization of nouns is done by means of adjectives (*forestales*), by relative clauses (*personas que están en España*). Noun characterization is a common feature found in the academic data studied in section 5.2. Other constituents selected in the thematic structure are prepositional phrases, which function as circumstantial adjuncts, and interpersonal and conjunctive adjuncts. Three dependent clauses occur in theme fronted to the dominant clause.

Textual themes include conjunctive adjuncts and conjunctions. Modal themes are realized by two thematised comments and two personal projected clauses.

A comparison of these grammatical units with those identified in SP1 shows that Student C has selected as theme appropriate types of grammatical structures. This seems to indicate a fairly good linguistic command. It is not surprising that the oral skills of this student are on the B/A grade. The grade awarded for this written task, however, was a bare pass. One of the reasons for this poor mark was a considerable lack of specific lexis, which is partially disclosed in the thematic analysis (*personas que están en España* instead of *los residentes españoles)*. Other reasons given to justify the poor mark were omissions as regard content (already highlighted in the ideational themes), poor structure, and lack of depth and analysis. This shows that Student C is unaware of how to apply his language ability to writing.

By looking at the theme content in consecutive sentences, we will be able to identify how each theme is connected to the previous part of the text and how much experiential content is foregrounded in each sentence. The initial sentence introduces *los*

incendios forestales in a way that is more appropriate for a middle part, nonetheless it succeedes in introducing a relevant aspect of the topic. In sentence 2 the theme and subject have been omitted. The omission of the subject in the second of two consecutive sentences which share the same subject is a common feature in Spanish, and student C seems to be well aware of it. However, the omitted subject of sentence 2 is part of the rheme of sentence 1 and not the subject of 1; this makes it more difficult to trace back the empty theme. Further, the structure 'not only... but' implies that the effects on residents have already been mentioned when in fact they have not; therefore it would have been more appropriate to express the subject in the theme and then to include the effects in the rheme, for example: *La destrucción de los bosques es un grave problema para los residentes.*

In Sentence 3 (*cuando incendios forestales ocurren*) and in 5 (*en muchos casos los que sufren de los incendios forestales*) the thematic structure has successfully provided a kind of frame for the message that comes in the rheme; at the same time cohesion is ensured by the reintroduction of *los incendios forestales* as part of the theme. In sentence 6, once more, the subject ('forest fires') has been omitted and the thematic slot has been left empty. Student C is trying to avoid repeating the same subject or perhaps he is aware of the fact that Spanish can omit the subject, as said earlier. Given the fact that this sentence deals with causes and that the reference of the elided subject is found quite far back in the text, it is more appropriate to reintroduce the subject in the theme of this sentence. Since Spanish shows a marked tendency to avoid the use of referential third person pronouns, the choices are either to repeat the subject or to use a synonym. Moreover, another common mechanism seen in the academic text analysed in section 5.2 involves expressing the subject with post or pre modifications to add new details, as just seen above: *los que sufren de los incendios forestales*; where 'forest fires' is the part of the noun group which is textually given, and *los que sufren* renders new information. This has the advantage of ensuring cohesion whilst at the same time maximising the communicative potential of the theme. This way of achieving progression and cohesion simultaneously was identified in the analysis of the SP1 as a commonly used mechanism.

The next sentence (7) represents a change of topic from forest fires to other environmental problems; choosing forest fires as part of the theme ensures cohesion but an explicit mention of the change orientates the reader towards the new direction the text is taking. A textual theme can assist in marking the transition from fires to other environmental problems: *Además de los incendios forestales / Pero los incendios forestales*. The next modal/ideational theme (8), whilst grammatically correct, is not lexically coherent as it fails to mention the evidence in support of the assertion made. The sentence in isolation is perfectly valid but it is not suited at this stage in the text. By simply omitting the modal part of the theme (*es evidente que*), the theme (*todas estas cosas*) is adequate and *estas* refers back to the previous rheme so that cohesion is achieved. The choice of existential *hay* in sentence 10 results in an empty theme; this creates a vacuum in the thematic progression and it affects the level of cohesion of the text, but it also means that no experiential content is provided. Further, the focus changes from the problems that affect the ozone layer to possible solutions. Thus, this gap can be filled by inserting a suitable thematic element before the existential verb or by selecting a different choice of verb with an overtly expressed thematic subject that can contribute, as said above, to mark the change of focus. By including in the theme 'the ozone layer' (*la capa de ozono*), which has been mentioned in the previous rheme, as a post-modifier (*El deterioro de la capa de ozono*) a smooth transition from the previous sentence to this sentence is accomplished. Sentences 11 and 12 are thematically successful in that one expects interpersonal intervention (11) towards the end of this type of text. Student C is well aware of subject omission in Spanish, but by leaving so many empty themes, he has failed to provide sufficient topical content.

The second aspect that was identified as problematic was the overall structure and analysis. By considering the themes of the text, we can gain an understanding of how the organization of the text was created and why it did not succeed.

Overall, looking at the theme types shows that out of 15 themes, 3 are textual and 5 are modal. Textual themes represent 20% of the total themes, which fall below the mark that the study of SP1 and EN1 texts showed. Modal themes represent a considerably higher ratio (33.33%) than the ratio of both EN1 and SP1. This gives an indication that the proportion of textual themes for this type of text seems to be

inadequate. However, it seems that student C is aware that the internal organization for the text is an important aspect of the task. And there are clear evidences (*con respecto a, también, para concluir*) to suggest that there has been an attempt to arrange the information with some sense of structure. The type of connectors and the stage at which textual markers occur is not always felicitous. Similarly, prepositional phrases which can serve to organize the text have been placed at the wrong stage. For example, the initial sentence contains *con respecto a*, which serves to point towards a particular aspect of the main issue. It implies that there have been other issues dealt with previously. The theme also contains an interpersonal element, which is not expected in this type of writing at the start of the text. The use of *también* in sentence 13 suggests that there is a continuation with the immediate preceding part of the text, when in fact it introduces a new contributor to pollution, therefore a different textual theme would have been more suited: e.g. *Además de la polución generada por los españoles residentes* [ ]/ *Otro aspecto que contribuye a la contaminación* [ ]. Furthermore, this paragraph can be placed together with the other problems mentioned earlier in the text, so that the essay is clearly divided into the problems on the one hand and the possible solutions on the other; thus creating a clear organization explaining the problems first, and then dealing with solutions.

The use of a few textual themes indicates that an attempt at organizing the information has been made but the choice of textual themes and the staging along the text are not very effective. This has consequences in the outcome, both in respect of the structure and in respect of the level of analysis and evaluation.

As seen in SP1, a much lesser proportion of textual elements tend to occur in chains of constant or derived themes in the expository part of the text; once the expository part has been established, the number of textual and modal themes increases. The theme of those clauses which contains the author's evaluation and analysis, are realized by dependent fronted clauses and/or interpersonal themes. In the text produced by student C, modal themes occur at the very beginning, in the middle section and towards the end. Dependent fronted clauses (temporal and conditional) occur towards the end of the text, but because there is no reference to the expository part it results in a lack of cohesion. The second aspect that affects analysis is the high number of interpersonal themes; this level of modality is more appropriate for persuasive texts, such as letters of

opinion or internet forums of opinion, for example. Added to the high ratio of interpersonal theme are their formal realizations. The use of the personal pronoun *yo* referring to the author is not found is Spanish academic writing. Personal projected clauses such as *yo pienso que* are perceived as belonging of the realm of the spoken register. This perception can be explained on the basis that the personal pronoun is used as an interpersonal marker and not as an ideational referent; that is, it is used to establish interaction among speakers (in writing the interaction between author and reader). Academic texts in Spanish tend to show hardly any references to readers. However, authors do express their views and defend their theories; these are rendered by other interpersonal structures such as thematised comments, which student C is also aware of.

Thus, the analysis reveals the type of themes and the stage in the text where they appear as the main features responsible for the poor structure and for the opinion based approach to the detriment of a more evaluative and analytical view. The analysis has shown that student C has a good knowledge of the required language structures but he is not aware of how to apply them to produce a more effective piece of writing. The main areas of difficulty are found in introducing new topics, changing direction on the trend established, and maximizing the theme slot to advance content. Despite his ability to use some conjunctive elements and clause complexes, the overall structure lacks clear organization due to the staging of both textual and interpersonal markers.

6.4 Student L

Student L has written two short essays on the subject of environmental issues: L1 is the first attempt and L2 her second enhanced version. The analysis of both essays is discussed below in order to identify the specific features that make L2 a better piece of writing for the requirements of the task.

No	Textual	Interpersonal	Ideational
1	Primero,		el cambio climático, el calentamiento global
2			España al igual que otros países
3			Desde la década de los ochenta los científicos
4			Para España [existential verb]

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5			El sur de España
6			La verdad lisa y llana
7			El calentamiento que sufrirá España
8			En España los animales en peligro de extinción
9			En los últimos diez años España
10			[los incendios forestales]
11		Es cierto que	[existential verb]
12			El transporte
13	También		[el transporte]
14		·	Para mejorar la situación del cambio climático los gobiernos
15	En total		[existential]
16	y		El objetivo principal
17		Yo creo que	el pacto
18			Para reducir las emisiones de Co2 la gente española
19	También ˉ	yo creo que es vital que	no se

Thematic elements: Table 2

The choice of ideational themes shows those aspects relevant to the subject matter, which have been addressed. There is mention of climate change, climate warming, transport, endangered species, the government of Spain and Spanish people; there are also time and geographical references: from the eighties, Spain, the south of Spain. References to solutions such as reduction of gas emissions are included at the end of the text. This first glance at the thematic choices serves to determine that the issues mentioned are central to the title of the essay and that the work covers the expected related topic.

A detailed look at the grammatical realizations reveals that ideational themes are realized mainly ˙by noun groups functioning as subjects and prepositional phrases functioning as circumstantial adjuncts. Nouns are modified by definite articles (*el, los*), by adjectives (*climático, española*), by prepositional phrases (*al igual que otros países, España, en peligro de extinción*) and by relative clauses (*el calentamiento que sufrirá España*). Circumstantial adjuncts denote time and spatial references, which is a typical device used to frame the message expressed in the rest of the sentence, particularly common in narrative and in exposition.

A quick look at table 2 shows that the staging of themes corresponds with the staging identified in SP1. The first part of the text contains mainly ideational theme subjects and adjuncts; and in the second textual and interpersonal markers have been introduced.

The analysis so far indicates that Student L has a good command of the language and has selected appropriate thematic content. The degree of success can be seen by looking at thematic progression, which contains only a few unsuccessful choices. Thematic elements chosen in sentences 2 to 7 are made of prepositional phrases and noun groups conveying details about either place (*España, el sur de España*) or time (*Desde la década de los 80*). They provide a frame in which to support the message put forward in the counterpart rhemes. These types of theme are found in the two types of text analysed previously, journalistic and academic; they tend to occur in expository parts within a text or in a text which is mainly concerned with the sequence of events. In sentence 9, a new aspect of the main topic, 'forest fires', has been introduced, but the time and spatial frame has been reintroduced as an orientating theme. However, there is no explicit mark to either connect this new aspect to the previous part of the text or to indicate that a change has taken place. 'Forest fires' can be presented as a contributor to climate change or as a separate problem affecting the environment in Spain. The subsequent sentences (11 and 12) abandon the spatial framing for an interpersonal theme as the only element in the theme (11), which then forms a simple linear theme with 12 in that the subject of 12 (transport) is taken from the rheme of 11. Continuation from 12 to 13 is underscored by conjunctive *'también'* and by sharing the same subject, which is rightly elided. In sentence 14, the change from problems to solutions has been marked by means of a non-finite dependent clause (*para* + infinitive), which contains an element from a previous part of the text (*el cambio climático*). This is a successful way of ensuring that the change of direction is signaled at the same time that cohesion between the two consecutive sentences is maintained. Further, the dependent clause provides an angle from which to interpret the main message. The same mechanism is used effectively in sentence 18. The end of the text (from sentence 17 onwards) includes an explicit personal view with regard to solutions and to the level of intervention on the part of the government.

The quality of the work just seen explains why Student L obtained high marks for it; however, she failed to get top marks on the basis that her work was more descriptive than analytical, as stated on the Mark Scheme of the examination board.

As said previously, the method of development shows the writer's main concerns and the organisation of the text. Thus, by looking at the themes of the text as a whole we will be able to identify the features that make L's work less analytical.

The ratio of types of theme selected indicates that textual themes account for only 17% of the total, which falls well below the level of textual themes found in both SP1 and EN1. The range of textual markers used is very limited: conjunctive adjuncts: *también* and *primero*. Further, the use of *primero* indicates that a sequence follows. This conjunctive adjunct is expressed in the first sentence, which can help to organize the information, but this is not followed through. Since climate change has been characterized as the main threat to the environment (*es la mayor amenaza*), it would have been better, to be consistent with the opening, to continue to qualify or grade the rest of the issues raised by the degree of danger. So that one can continue by saying 'the second main threat' and so forth. However, the initial sequencing hinted by the use of *primero* and the evaluative mode coded in *mayor amenaza* has been abandoned. The expository part is at first a successful decision but the second half of the text only contains two textual markers rendering addition. This limited range of textual markers, particularly in the second half, means that the text maintains the expository mode to a great extent. There are, however, two non-finite dependent clauses (14, 18), which achieve a higher level of engagement. The analysis of SP1 illustrates the use of fronted dependent clauses and of textual markers such as *sin embargo, pero,* in those parts where arguments were made.

Modal themes, which contribute to the staging of the text and offer the writer's views, are used with partial success. Out of the three modal elements two are personal projected clauses, which, as said above, are appropriate for other purposes and registers. Student L also uses modality realized as a thematised comment congruent with the type of task; this is inserted, however, at the middle of the text (11) suggesting a change in the tone of the text. The text, however, continues with the exposition of different problems related to the environment.

As the thematic analysis shows, Student L has most of the required language rudiments. It also illustrates that student L has a good understanding of how Spanish operates syntactically at clause level, it also shows a good knowledge of specific lexis.

There are, however, some improvements that she can implement. These include the use of a wider range of textual markers. Also, by arranging the information in clause complexes, the expression of dependent clause fronted to the dominant one will help to convey meaning in a more analytical manner. These types of thematic content enable a more analytical angle by coding cause and effect, condition, and so forth.

Student L produced an enhanced version (L2) of this essay. Theme choices are shown in the table below:

No	Textual	Interpersonal	Ideational
1			España igual igual que el resto de los países
2	Pero	quizás	el cambio climático, el calentamiento global
3			Desde la década de los ochenta los científicos
4			Cristina Narbona
5			[existential verb]
6			España
7			El sur de España
8			Otra amenaza que tiene España
9			En los últimos diez años España
10			[Ø]
11			Otro problema que afecta al medio ambiente en España
12			El transporte
13	También		[el transporte]
14	Pero		los coches
15	Sin embargo		el gobierno
16			Para mejorar la situación del cambio climático los gobiernos
17			el objetivo principal de este pacto
18	Pero		[nosotros]
19		en mi opinión	cada persona

Thematic elements: Table 3

A comparison of L1 and L2 tables shows that the main difference between the thematic content in the two tables rests with two features: the connection between consecutive clauses, and the number and type of textual themes included. A difference can also be appreciated in the choice and number of interpersonal themes. Cohesion between consecutive clauses has improved by overtly signalling how contiguous sentences relate to one another (e.g. *otro problema*).

With regard to textual themes, the proportion included is nearly 10% higher than it was in the previous attempt. Further, textual themes occur towards the middle and in the second part of the text after the expository part. The distribution of textual themes

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serves to clearly mark two parts in the text: the first half contains a description of the main problems and the second half discusses possible solutions. This layout is enhanced by the use of both a textual and an interpersonal element in theme in sentence 2 to evaluate the most concerning problem; thus, the expository part also contains evaluation. The use of more and varied types of textual themes contributes to the evaluation of the solutions proposed. By introducing these simple changes in the theme content, the text has resulted in a better organized and more analytical essay.

6.5 Student R

Themes are listed in the table below:

No	Textual	Interpersonal	Ideational
1			[existential verb]
2			[inmigrantes]
3	Pero		[inmigrantes]
4	Y tambien		[inmigrantes]
5			Estas personas
6	Asi que		[estas perosnas]
7			[Estas personas]
8			Muchas personas
9			[Muchas personas]
10			[existential verb]
11	pero		[existential verb]
12		Desafortunadam	muchas de estas personas
13			Cuando llegan a España la mayoría de inmigrantes
14			Les*
15	Tambien	Es muy difícil	a ganar
16		Es difícil	a altenar
17			muchos españoles
18			Porque no hay suficientes trabajos para todos, los españoles y los inmigrantes algunos españoles
19			Esto
20			La mayoría de los inmigrantes
21		En mi opinión	la inmigración
22			Le*
23			Esto
24		Pienso que	a inmigración

Thematic elements: Table 4

* les and le are meant as subject pronouns

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Ideational content includes human participants, mainly: *españoles, inmigrantes,* referential *esto,* and two dependent clauses rendering time and cause respectively. The range in ideational content seems restricted to immigrants and local people; this high ratio of human participants was more often found in fictional narrative and in journalistic articles, more than in academic research types of text. Thematising human participants indicates that the topic is dealt with from the human experience angle. It is concerned with the effects of immigration on those people involved. Progression is achieved largely by chains of constant theme; these chains show subject omission after the first clause, which indicates that Student R is aware of the fact that ellipsis of the subject is a feature of Spanish. But, by leaving the theme slot empty, the information is disproportionally distributed within the clause and the theme lacks in experiential content in theme. The work was marked in the middle of the grading scale; one reason for this was the lack of relevant content. This lack of content can be appreciated in the underused thematic structure. Constant themes ensure cohesion but, if further experiential content is not added to the theme, it underuses the communicative potential of the thematic structure. Overtly expressed subjects containing elaborations ensure that thematic content is put forward at the same time that cohesion is maintained. Student R maintains cohesion to the detriment of progression. Omitting the subject also indicates that the aspects introduced in the rheme have not been picked up in the next sentence in order to be expanded or elaborated. While experiential content in theme indicates the lack of topical material provided in the essay, the ratio and distribution of textual themes explains why the structure does not compliment the work. The percentage of textual themes is just above 20%, which is as high as the ratio of interpersonal markers. Further, textual themes tend to cluster around the first half of the text, which creates a better organisation; in the second half, however, interpersonal themes dominate. The type of textual markers that Student R uses are suitable for the task *(pero, así que),* including the use of two dependent clauses fronted to the main clause. It is their distribution in the text that makes the structure unclear and uneven. The ratio of interpersonal themes is higher than expected but their formal realization (thematised comments and modal adjuncts) is congruent with the task. The fact that thematised comments do not follow after a clear expository part results in the expression of unsupported views.

In sum, Student R has a good knowledge of the language and a good ability to manipulate its structures at clause level, but this is not used to best effect. She could benefit from learning how to advance content in theme and how to stage textual and interpersonal markers to create the appropriate organization frame for the text.

6.6 Student B

Themes are listed in the table below:

No	Textual	Interpersonal	Ideational
1			La inmigración
2	Y	quizás	eso
3		Normalmente	los inmigrantes que viven en Espana
4	entonces		ellos
5			La mayoría
6			Otra categoría
7	Pero		[existential verb]
8		Hay que tener en cuenta que	los países mencionados
9	pero		el mas gran numero de europeos en España
10			ellos
11	y		[ellos]
12			Por jente latina inmigrar a Espana
13	pero	no es ideal	[la gente latina]
14	y por eso		mucha jente
15			Además de ese tipo de problema[existential]
16			Los españoles
17			algun jente
18	pero también		[existential]
19	y	Yo soy de acuerdo	[Ø]
20			un pais
21	pero también	pienso que	ese mundo
22	y si		alguien

Thematic elements: Table 5

The ratio of textual themes falls in line with findings in SP1 and EN1. This first appreciation indicates that the distribution of type of themes according to the purpose of the text seems adequate. The type of textual themes used is mainly *y* and *pero* periodically repeated along the text. This creates a chain of arguments and counterarguments, which serves to give the text a clear structure. This is a similar method to the one seen in EN1 text.

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Thematic progression includes predominantly constant thematic chains; the connection between consecutive themes is achieved through the use of referential elements (*eso, mencionados, este*). The effort to maintain cohesion is apparent in the use of the personal pronoun of third person as subjects (*ellos*). This shows a good command of grammar at the syntactic level but the use of referential subjects of the third person is uncommon in Spanish. Subject ellipsis is preferred. Further, the use of the referential subject means that the theme slot is not used to foreground new information; circumstantial adjuncts are usually expressed in constant thematic chains to provide experiential content, which serves to anchor the subject. She makes no use of this technique. This has an effect on the amount of content details provided overall. This becomes more apparent when ideational elements are considered; they contain references almost exclusively to people and countries: *inmigrantes, españoles, España, otros países, europeos, gente latina, problema*. This corroborates the perception of the text as lacking in content, in which the factual information can be put forward to be followed by the analysis and discussion. This is also perceptible in formal realizations of themes (lack of prepositional phrases and lack of elaborated noun groups).

Student B shows a good understanding of the importance of the method of development and manages the text well in this regard, but the lack of content in theme resulted in gaining a poor mark for the work.

6.7 Conclusions

The above analysis has revealed some recurring problems, namely the expression of new ideational content, the range of textual and modal elements and the staging of thematic elements across the text. But the greatest difficulties tend to involve the use of textual themes. This difficulty is apparent in two ways; on the one hand, in the number of textual themes employed in comparison to the rest, particularly interpersonal themes; and on the other, in the suitability of the textual themes selected to appear in the thematic structure at a given stage of the text.

Most learners show awareness of some of the most common cohesive devices. They achieve cohesion by placing the subject in initial position and by using referential elements, including that of relating a sentence to the previous one(s). While cohesion is generally achieved, chains of constant themes result in lack of progression. Learners find it difficult to add new details to the given subject theme by means of elaboration or circumstantial adjuncts. Further, difficulty in changing direction within the same topic is also evident. This same mechanism can be used to introduce a new subject. By opting for referential subjects or ellipsis the thematic slot is left empty and cohesion is achieved in detriment of progression. Empty themes are particularly problematic in cases where existential processes were used because the theme provides no experiential content. A circumstantial adjunct fronted to these processes can provide such content. Moreover, it seems that all learners are aware of the thematic role of the subject or the subject ellipsis but were less trained in the use of expansions and elaborations to enhance the subject. On the whole, there is a marked tendency to underuse the communicative potential of the thematic structure. All learners studied could benefit from learning how to accommodate more content in the theme without affecting cohesion.

The overall organization of the information in the text is affected by the type of themes chosen and by the stage at which they were inserted. First, the ratio of interpersonal themes is generally high for the register. Second, the formal realization of themes is not always felicitous. While most of the learners make use of thematised comments, they also include personal projected clauses. These contain personal pronouns of the first person, which have a strong deictic function in Spanish. In essay writing interaction between the writer and the reader is not expected; this is not to say that personal views and opinions cannot be included. Interpersonal meaning can be realized with a different type of interpersonal element, which lacks the interactive orientation. Further, they can also be used to justify the direction taken, or the focus of the work on a particular aspect. Both interpersonal and textual elements can be used to mark internal boundaries in the text. This is one of the reasons why the staging of interpersonal and textual elements is important. Further, logical meanings such as cause and effect, condition and argumentations tend to be coded in textual markers and in dependent clauses fronted to dominant clauses. The lack of textual markers and the limited range,

(most textual markers were conjunctions *y, pero,* and conjunctive adjuncts, *tambien, primero*) explain to a great extent the descriptive tone of most of the work examined.

Students' Essays

Student C

(1) Con respecto a la situación del medio ambiente en España, es evidente que los incendios forestales son un grande problema y arruinan la mayoría de áreas leñosas. (2) No sólo es un grande problema para los residentes pero también para los animales y los que se ganan la vida de la agricultura y la cosecha. (3) Cuándo incendios forestales ocurren es muy duro aumendar la situación (4) y pueden dejar las personas sin hogares y sin trabajos, (5) en muchos casos los que sufren de los incendios forestales no son la causa del problema. (6) Son causados por incontrolable temperturas de fuegos. (7) No sólo son los incendios forestales los del problema son muchas otras cosas por ejemplo emmisions de coche, la basura alrededor del estado y la contaminación en el agua. (8) Es evidente que todas estas cosas no ayuden el medio ambiente (9) y afecten la capa de ozono. (10) Hay muchas maneras que la capa de ozono se podría ayudar, por ejemplo manteniendo la condición de coches y no utilizando coches para distancias cortas. (11) En mi opinión personal yo pienso que el estado debe multar a los que afecten el medio ambiente y acercioran las reglas y la regulación para el público. (12) Si el público no puede mantener un ambiente limpio y respetable la situación va hacer peor. (13) También no es sólo las personas adentro del estado pero también los turistas que visitan para vacaciones, (14) cuando no es el lugar de vivir de ellos, no tienen tanto respeto como en su país propio y citios donde viven. (15) Para concluir pienso que personas que están en España deben mantener el medio ambiente de una manera más importante porque podria sufrir la familia en el futuro.

Student L1

(1) Primero, el cambio climatico, el calentamiento global es la mayor amenaza ambiental de este siglo. (2) España, al igual que otros paises, va a sufrir gravemente las consecuencias del cambio climático. (3) Desde la decada de los ochenta los cientificos han observado un incremento en el nivel de las gases de invernadero debido a la actividad industrial del hombre, y la consecuencia es el calentamiento global. (4) Para España habrá un considerable aumento de las inundaciones, de las sequias, y las condiciones climáticas extremas. (5) El sud de España sera especialmente afectada por el cambio climatico (6) y la verdad lisa y llana es que la forma del pais cambiará gravemente.

(7) El calentamiento que sufrirá España afectará tambien a los animales. (8) En España los animales en peligro de extinción son el oso pardo (uno de los animales más representativos de la fauna española), el lobo y el lince.

(9) En los ultimos diez años España ha perdido, aproximadamente 1 millón de hectáreas de superficie arbolada por los incendios forestales. (10) No solo destruyen los arboles sino la habitacion de miles de animales. (11) Es cierto que haya demasiades coches en la carretera. (12) El transporte representa 11% de las emisiones de CO2 a la atmosfera. (13) Tambien contribuye a las emisiones de gases de invernadero y la destrucción de la capa de ozono.

(14) Para mejorar la situación del "cambio climático" los gobiernos acordaron en 1997 el protocolo de Kioto. (15) En total hay 141 paises en el pacto (16) y objetivo principal es afrontar, y limitar la agresión de las temperaturas más altas el crecimiento de los mares y los climas más extremos. (17) Yo creo que el pacto deberia incluir a los paises pobres tambien porque es un problema mundial. (18) Para reducir las emisiones de CO2 la gente española deberian beneficiarse del uso del transporte publico en España es muy barato. (19) Tambien yo creo que es vital que no se ponga gasolina en dias de alto contenido de ozono.

Student L2

España igual que otros países sufre varios problemas medioambientales. (2) Pero, quizás, el cambio climático, el calentamiento global sea la mayor amenza ambiental de este siglo. (3) Desde la decada de los ochenta los cientificos han observado un incremento en el nivel de los gases de invernadero debido a la actividad industrial del hombre, y la consecuencia es el calentamiento global. (4) Cristina Narbona ha anunciado consecuencias desastrosas para Espana. (5) Habrá un considerable aumento de las inundaciones, de las sequias, y las condiciones climáticas extremas. (6) España es un pais con muchso kilómetros de costa y por lo tanto la subida de los niveles del mar causaría una perdida de muchas playas – afectando la industria con mas importancia para España – el turismo. (7) El sur de España será especialmente afectada por el cambio climático y la verdad lisa y llana es que la forma del pais cambiará gravemente.

(8) Otra amenza que tiene es los incendios forestales. (9) En los últimos diez anos España ha perdido, aproximadamente 1 millón de hectáreas de superficie arbolada por los incendios forestales. (10) No solo destruyen los árboles sino la habitación de miles de animales. (11) Otro problema que afecta a España es el uso masivo de los automóviles. (12) El transporte representa 11% de las emisiones de C02 a la atmosfera. (13) Tambien contribuye a las emisiones de gases de invernadero y la destrucción de la capa de ozono. (14) Pero los coches tienen una gran importancia en nuestras vidas, especialmente en el mundo moderno, así que no creo que sea fácil evitar el uso del coche. (15) Sin embargo el gobierno debería concienciar a los ciudadanos de la importancia de usar el transporte público.

(16) Para mejorar la situación del "cambio climático" los gobiernos acordaron en 1997 el protocolo de Kioto. (17) El objetivo principal de este pacto es afrontar, y limitar la agresión de las temperaturas más altas. (18) Pero ¿tenemos razon es esperrar que el gobierno resuelva este problema? (19). En mi opinión cada persona debería hacer un esfuerza para combatir todos los problemas, y salvar el planeta para nuestro hijos.

Student R

La Situación de la Inmigración en España u Otra País Hispanohablante

(1) Hay muchos inmigrantes en España de muchos países. (2) Vienen de África sobre todo del llamado Magreb, o sea, Marruecos y Argelia, (3) pero también del África subsahariana, de países como Senegal, Malí o Nigeria. (4) Y también vienen de otros países como América Latina, sobre todo de Ecuador, Perú, Colombia, República Dominicana, Cuba, Argentina y Brasil.

(5) Estas personas dejan su país por muchos razones como pobreza, las razones políticas, y sus calidad de vida. (6) Así que buscan por una vida mejor. (7) Piensan que España es un país de muchas oportunidades, para trabajar y criar una familia.

(8) Muchas personas intentan a entrar en España para cruzado el Estrecho de Gibraltar. (9) Viajan en pateras que son barcas muy pequeñas. (10) No hay mucho espacio (11) pero hay muchas personas en cada barca. (12) Desafortunadamente muchas de estas personas no sobreviven el viaje.

(13) Cuando llegan en España, la mayoría de inmigrantes encuentran muchas problemas, (14) les encuentran muy difícil a obtener un trabajo porque muchos jefes discriminan hacia ellos. (15) También es muy difícil a ganar estado legal. (16) Es difícil a alternar con las personas españoles porque son tratados diferente. (17) Muchos españoles piensan que todas los inmigrantes estan la misma, que significa que hay algunos casos de violencia y racismo.

(18) Porque no hay suficiente trabajos para todos, los españoles y los inmigrantes, algunos españoles perden sus trabajos a los inmigrantes. (19) Esto puede causar más discriminación hacia los inmigrantes. (20) La mayoría de los inmigrantes obtenen trabajos que los españoles no les gustan como trabajos malas pagadas.

(21) En mi opinión, la inmigración es una problema grande en España. (22) Le afectan los empleos de los españoles, (23) esto puede causar mucha discriminación hacia los inmigrantes. (24) Pienso que la inmigración puede ser una cosa buena también, porque es bueno a tener muchas razas y culturas en el país.

Student B

La inmigracion en Espana

(1) La inmigracion es un tema muy contencioso hoy en dia, especialmente en un pais como Espana, que tiene tanta cultura y personalidad latina, (2) y quizas eso es un razon muy fuerte por que los espanoles tienen, todavia, problemas en ese capitulo: aceptar y mezclar con otras culturas de todo el mundo, cuando suya es tan brillante ya y no necesita cambiarse.
(3) Normalmente, los inmigrantes que vienen a Espana son de paises poco desarrollados y con trabajos mal pagados – (4) entonces ellos inmigran, sin dinero pero con suenos en su corazones.
(5) La mayoria proceden de Africa, sobre todo Marruecos y Argelia, o de paises de America Latina como Ecuador, Peru, Cuba y Brasil. (6) Otra categoría es del Este de Europa: Rumania, Ucrania y Rusia, (7) pero hay tambien jente de China y Filipinas. (8) Hay que tener en cuenta que los paises mencionados estan considerados pobres, (9) pero el mas gran numero de europeos en Espana es representado por los ingleses, alemanos y franceses.
(10) Ellos inmigran porque tienen educacion y pueden ganar dinero bueno en trabajos decentas, (11) y no tienen barreras de estereotipos por ser de Este de Europa, por ejemplo.
(12) Por jente latina, inmigrar en Espana es un poco mas facil, porque ellos al menos saben la idioma, (13) pero no es ideal, porque tienen un acente diferente, (14) y por eso mucha jente los discriminan. (15) Ademas de ese tipo de problema, hay muchas otras relacionadas con el racismo, la delincuencia en que muchos inmigrantes estan implicados, la salud (los inmigrantes ilegales no tienen ningun derecho), alquilar una vivienda digna y los mal condiciones laborales.
(16) Los espanoles han opiniones diferenciadas – (17) algun jente en es contra de la inmigración, porque entonces trabajo esta robado por otra jente, (18) pero, tambien hay otros que se entregan que ningun español va a trabajar en la agricultura como una mano de obra barata, (19) y yo soy de acuerdo tambien – (20) un pais necesita inmigración por trabajar en que la jente del pais anfitrion no va a trabajar, (21) pero, tambien pienso que ese mundo apartenece a todos y hay un lugar para cada de nosotros, (22) y si alguien quiere viajar y ganar experiencia, cercarse de un pais, porque prohibirlo?

7. Pedagogical Implications

7.1 Introduction

Students taking Advanced Level Spanish courses in England and Wales must pass exam papers containing a high proportion of questions that involve the use of written language; for example: translations, reading and listening comprehension tasks, which require answers in the target language. Thus, writing is undoubtedly the skill that carries the highest proportion of marks from the total available. Apart from these types of task, which involve single sentences or short paragraphs, one of the tasks that learners must face is to write essays and coursework in an academic fashion. Such writing assignments are intended as preparation for the type of writing they must undertake in Higher Education.

Writing essays involves specific skills in the language that stretch beyond the ability to manipulate language at the syntactic level and beyond a fair degree of lexical knowledge, which may be sufficient to accomplish tasks involving short answers. A quick look at an A-level marking scheme indicates reward for writing which shows 'clear, systematic and coherent' responses, 'clear viewpoint/sense of purpose', 'coherent exposition/conclusion'; whereas candidates lose marks when their work shows 'insufficient focus on central themes', 'a strong tendency to describe rather than analyse', 'general lack of analysis and overall organization' (Mark Scheme WJEC: Welsh Joint Education Committee, 2005). These assessment criteria come under the category labelled as "Quality of response"; this category also determines the band allocation for the rest of the stipulated categories (range of vocabulary, content and accuracy). That is, examiners emphasize that a piece of work is allocated marks for quality of response in the first place; then marks are granted for the rest of the components, but under no circumstances must these marks fall within a higher band than the one given for Quality of response. Thus, the aspects stated above regarding discourse cohesion, focus and purpose are vital for the learner to score a high mark overall.

Yet most published grammars intended for second language learners fail to mention discourse features in general and word order in particular, which is a feature that affects not only the arrangement of each clause but also the overall organization of the text. One exception to this tradition is Butt and Benjamin's (1994) Spanish grammar, which contains a chapter devoted to word order. The chapter opens with the often-quoted statement that word order in Spanish is 'free'. It continues explaining word order variations, which depend on considerations of 'style, context, emphasis and rhythm of the sort that few non-natives are sensitive to' (1994: 464). They list a set of categories of word order realizations ranging from prescriptive rules (set phrases are not broken, for example). These rules are useful for learners to prevent them from making grammatical errors. A second category of word order realizations is included, in which the wording varies depending on several factors but in which alternative arrangements are grammatically correct and fairly common. An extreme example of these multiple combinations is quoted below. Clauses are ranked as in the original, reflecting frequency and level of 'natural sounding':

> *Inés leyó el libro,*
>
> *el libro lo leyó Inés,*
>
> *el libro Inés lo leyó,*
>
> *Inés el libro leyó,*
>
> *leyó Inés el libro,*
>
> *leyó el libro Inés.*

This mixture of rules and grammatically correct combinations not only contradicts the statement made initially that Spanish has a free word order but also gives learners little help on how to determine which given order to choose. Equally important there is no mention of the effects that a given ordering has in the discourse beyond the level of the clause.

Researchers, on the other hand, have not come up with a comprehensive theory that explains different word order realizations in Spanish and its effect at discourse level, as seen in section 4.

Language course programmes generally assume that students taking those courses join them with writing skills or ought to acquire them, either intuitively or by

manipulating the language at syntactic level. On the other hand, teachers have to grade written work, produced by learners, as having different degrees of quality or success; and whilst they can perceive the degree of effectiveness of a writing piece, feedback offered to learners does not always make explicit the linguistic features responsible for quality (or lack of it). Comments tend to be generic and tend to lack practical guidance on how to make improvements in linguistic terms. As Bloor and Bloor (1995: 227) admit, "it is very difficult sometimes to explain precisely why one speaker or writer seems better than another".

Functional grammar in general, and thematic analysis in particular, have proved to be an effective tool to identify the precise features that make a text more successful than others for the purpose it tries to accomplish. This application of theme studies is gaining considerable attention within systemic circles as a method to study features of 'valued' texts in order to identify the precise linguistic mechanisms that make the texts successful. In Australia, discourse analysis is being used on a large scale, aimed at implementing findings in the educational system. Halliday and Martin (1993) have taken a strong stance on the need to teach writing skills in secondary schools and universities in order to fight the uneven distribution of employment across social, regional and ethnic groups. Berry (1995), convinced by similar arguments, is involved in a project at the University of Nottingham, whose aims are to provide information for teachers of English (as mother tongue), which will assist them in preparing students for the kind of writing tasks they will have to carry out in the work place.

In the field of Foreign Languages (FL), Ventola and Mauranen (1991) compare texts written in English by native English speakers and texts written by Finnish speakers. The comparison enables them to identify what problems Finnish students have in writing in English; the problems highlighted are the use of connectors and the lack of variety of the connectors used.

In a later study Mauranen (1996) identifies problems that Finnish learners have in the production of texts in English. These were mainly the use of themes that were not related to the preceding text, and the use of rhemes which were basically the same as previous rhemes. She points out that the problems they have in writing English are not problems they had writing in Finnish.

In my own experience, English learners that take English language and Spanish courses may, for example, score high marks in English but not necessarily in Spanish. That is, the ability that learners have in writing in their first language does not correlate with the level of competence in the FL; further, the ability within the FL in one skill, i.e. speaking, is not necessarily equivalent to the level of ability in writing.

The successful choice of appropriate themes, within the grammatical choices available, without doubt results in more coherent and better organized essays, in successful expressions of viewpoints, and in making clear the central topic or topics of the work. Thus, correlations between the WJEC criteria stated above and the functions of theme can easily be drawn. If students are shown the relevance of the first position in the sentence and the possibilities at stake, both in terms of grammatical choices and in terms of the effect that placement of information in first position has on the organization of the whole text, they could learn to choose the appropriate syntactic structure depending on the thematic need. In other words, learners can make use of word order variations to make more successful thematic choices, which will translate into a more effective and better-organized text. This means that we are moving from pointing out the fact that Spanish shows syntactic word order variation (SVO, VS and VO) towards understanding and recognizing the impact that the ordering will have on the meaning of the text. In other words, learners can be taught how to use word order choices as a resource to create meaning.

7. 2 Thematic Content and Register

The thematic analyses of the sample texts have shown significant differences in the thematic content, depending on register and purpose. This means that these differences need to be taken into consideration in a teaching setting and that a first broad division between spoken and written language needs to be refined to deeper levels of delicacy to account for those differences.

- The theme analyses carried out in the present study have been restricted to exposition and analysis/evaluation in writing and to multiple-speaker conversation in

speech. Linguistic features and progression patterns identified are pertinent to these types of text. Some of these features, however, are shared with other types of text, because a given text often tries to accomplish different purposes at different stages. This is evident in the similarities found in journalistic articles and in the Spanish academic text. Newspaper reports contain mainly exposition, whereas the Spanish academic text contains an expository part followed by an analytical / evaluative section. It was shown that the expository part of the academic Spanish text shares some features with the news reports.

The analysis of students' written work has identified problems in two main areas: thematic progression and the method of development. Students find it particularly challenging to choose the appropriate types of theme and to place them at the appropriate stage in the text. With respect to the former, there are two aspects which prove more difficult: the ability to connect successfully the new theme to the previous part of the text and the ability to achieve cohesion and progression at the same time; that is, to be able to foreground ideational content in the theme yet maintain cohesion. When cohesion in consecutive sentences is achieved by the use of personal pronoun subjects or by subject ellipsis, the text shows a clear lack of relevant ideational content; in cases where new content is introduced, it tends to lack cohesion:

> (9) *En los ultimos diez años España ha perdido, aproximadamente 1 millón de hectáreas de superficie arbolada por los incendios forestales.* (10) *No solo destruyen los arboles sino la habitacion de miles de animales.* (11) *Es cierto que haya demasiades coches en la carretera.* (12) *El transporte representa 11% de las emisiones de C02 a la atmosfera.*.
> Student L1

In the above example, the change from the forest fires (9 and 10) to the problem of transport (11) is not thematically marked; this results in lack of cohesion.

While learners do not need to produce the kind of long heavy themes found in the Spanish academic text (SP1), they can make use of the same syntactic structures to maximize the potential of the thematic slot. Cohesion and progression are usually accomplished by choosing as theme of the new sentence an element from the preceding part of the text (or a synonymous or derived element), which is then modified with adjectives, prepositional phrases or relative clauses. The element that is repeated ensures cohesion and the rest provides progression. If the same subject is maintained over more

than one sentence, the theme subject is omitted usually in the second of a pair of two consecutive clauses; if the same theme is maintained over several clauses then the subject is often reintroduced as a synonym or as a related term and again the noun head is expanded by adjectives, prepositional phrases, appositions or relative clauses. Equally, the element taken from the preceding part of the text can be part of the expansion and the added new information constitutes the noun head of the theme. The expression of textually given ideational information in the theme can certainly improve cohesion; the inclusion of new information contributes to the development of the text. The example below illustrates how cohesion and progression is achieved. In sentence 16, *el protocolo de Kioto* has been introduced in the rheme; then the theme of sentence 17 contains a new part (*el objetivo principal*) expanded by a prepositional phrase referring to the protocol (*de este pacto*). This ensures that the text progresses and that it does it cohesively.

> (16) *Para mejorar la situación del "cambio climático" los gobiernos acordaron en 1997 el protocolo de Kioto.* (17) *El objetivo principal de este pacto es afrontar, y limitar la agresión de las temperaturas más altas.* Student L2

A further method of adding ideational content is achieved by fronting circumstantial adjuncts to the noun group (subject) in thematic position; this is particularly frequent in exposition/narration. The role of the circumstantial adjunct is twofold; it codes ideational content providing information such as where or when but it also contributes to the organization of the text. Circumstantial adjuncts serve to anchor the message beyond the clause to which they belong. This means that they need to be kept in line with the rest of the organization of the text. Some learners make good local use of this resource to frame their messages (e.g. 'from the eighties', 'in the last ten years', 'in Spain'), but often fail to continue with the same line of organization in the text or in part of it. That is, they may include or repeat similar types of reference or may abandon that particular structure without any textual indication of doing so.

The use of this grammatical resource is indeed a commonly used device in narration and exposition because it provides vital ideational information regarding 'where' and 'when' and because it supplies a fairly straightforward textual organization. Its use, nonetheless, has implications beyond the grammatical system. It requires learners to be familiar with the geography of the countries concerned and with sequence of events, particularly as regards recent history.

A further source of difficulty is the introduction of new themes into the discourse; new themes may include either a different aspect of a previously introduced topic or a new aspect relevant to the essay topic. As said above, a new aspect can be introduced by adding new information to a textually old element in the theme; if, for example, 'the ozone layer' (*la capa de ozono*) has been mentioned in the previous rheme, it can then be inserted as a post-modifier in the following one: *El deterioro de la capa de ozono*. Other grammatical means involve the use of prepositions and conjunctions (*Además de los incendios forestales / Pero los incendios forestales);* the use of the determiners (*otro, otra, otros, otras*) followed by generic nouns such as *aspecto, problema* and so forth (*Otro aspecto que contribuye a la contaminación*).

A further syntactic structure that provides a link with the preceding text is non-finite dependent clauses. They are not highly demanding in terms of the grammatical manipulation involved: the verb goes in the infinitive (or gerund or past participle) form and the subject is not required. Non-finite dependent clauses are very useful to foreground ideational information, which make the text move forward in a cohesive and engaging manner. For example, sentences 18 and 19 (student R)

> (18) *Porque no hay suficiente trabajos para todos, los españoles y los inmigrantes, algunos españoles perden sus trabajos a los inmigrantes.* (19) *Esto puede causar más discriminación hacia los inmigrantes.*

can be rephrased, as follows:

> *Ademas de sufrir discriminación en el trabajo* (idea expressed in the preceding paragraph), *los españoles creen que hay falta de trabajos para todos y que pierden sus trabajos por causa de los inmigrantes.*

The ability to change the direction of the text is also a source of difficulty for learners; that is, to change the organization from a chronological/geographical order to any other order or to be able to move the text from a narrative or expository mode towards analysis and evaluation.

A way of changing the tone of the text involves the use of interpersonal themes to justify a particular aspect towards which the attention is diverted. Interpersonal themes were scarcely used in SP1, but they were staged at key points within the text to achieve the desired effect. The interpersonal element may occur together with a textual marker.

The most commonly used by students is the conjunction *pero*; a sample of this technique is found in the enhanced version of student L:

(1) *España igual que otros países sufre varios problemas medioambientales.* (2) *Pero, quizás, el cambio climático, el calentamiento global sea la mayor amenza ambiental de este siglo.* Student L2

A similar effect can be created with non-finite dependent clauses fronted to the dominant clause:

(18) *Para reducir las emisiones de C02 la gente española deberian beneficiarse del uso del transporte publico en España es muy barato.* Student L1

In general, the work produced by students reveals that the use of textual themes is one of the main problematic areas for learners. Mauranen and Ventola (1991) also found that Finnish students when writing in English experienced more difficulties in the handling of textual themes. The fact that both Finnish and English students seem to share some of the problems may not be accidental. The work analysed here shows that learners can use certain conjunctive elements well, mainly additive (*y, además*), and that most of them can make good use of adversative *pero*. Notice that this type of text marker was identified in the extract from *Crónica* and in the journalistic reports. The analysis of SP1 shows that textual markers are coded using a wider range of conjunctions and conjunctive adjuncts as compared with other types of text, e.g. *en efecto, por otra parte, de modo que, asimismo*. The use of this kind of textual elements contributes to give the message an analytical and critical angle. Conjunctive elements tend to be presented to learners as a list of connectors that can be used to link clauses, sentences and paragraphs. We need to show students not only how to manipulate them at sentence level, but also how to use them to contribute to the overall structure of the essay and to encode messages containing critical analysis. Thus the type of connectors and the stage at which they are inserted are meaningful.

Further, dependent clauses both finite and non-finite are used in the part of the text that contains analysis and evaluation; the manipulation of this type of compound clauses constitutes one of the learners' main problematic areas. Dependent clauses

fronted to the dominant clause provide a suitable linguistic resource to express critical analysis. The work produced by students shows some cases of compound clauses;

(18) *Porque no hay suficiente trabajos para todos, los españoles y los inmigrantes, algunos españoles perden sus trabajos a los inmigrantes.* (19) *Esto puede causar más discriminación hacia los inmigrantes.* (20) *La mayoría de los inmigrantes obtenen trabajos que los españoles no les gustan como trabajos malas pagados.*

The ideas expressed in sentences 18 and 19 are contradicted by sentence 20. By rephrasing it we obtain a more coherent and analytical picture:

Aunque los inmigrantes hacen los trabajos que los españoles no quieren, los espanoles piensan que los inmigantes les roban los puestos de trabajo. Esto [...].

A further problematic area identified is balancing exposition and analysis, on the one hand, and expressing coherent evaluation, on the other. Analysis does not necessarily follow exposition; evaluation is frequently unsupported by relevant evidence. This is so because evaluation often refers to a new idea rather than to any of the ideas previously presented. In this respect, the isolation of the thematic content of each sentence can help to identify the aspects that have been mentioned in the expository part and consequently to identify the type of evaluation that is suitable. Moreover, this simple exercise can also help to detect any relevant omission in the expository part.

A further insight obtained from the theme analysis of the sample texts is that the type of participants made thematic differs according to genre. Berry (1995) analyses children writing about Grantham as a tourist destination. She claims that there is a correlation between the type of theme (informational or interpersonal) and the success in the writing. The academic texts (SP1 and EN1) display a low number of human participants as subjects in comparison with the journalistic texts. Two of the pieces of work produced by students contain a high proportion of human participants in the thematic slot functioning as subjects. This gives the text a particular angle, which is more appropriate for other types of writing such as letters of opinion, for example. While human participants may be suitable themes at certain stages in the text, they are not the dominant participants in specialized texts. Theme subjects thematised in specialized texts tend to include nouns rendering concepts, such as *reglas, modelo, formas* and so forth (SP1); they also include nominalizations, which are nouns used to express the meaning of processes. For example, in SP1 nouns such as *publicación, distribución, actuación,*

estudios, análisis and *variación* come from *publicar, distribuir, actuar, estudiar analizar* and *variar.* One of the advantages of using nominalizations is that the subject of the nominalised verb, which is usually a human participant, is not expressed. But they also enable the writer to pack more information in each sentence because the nominal takes up the theme slot, ensuring that the rheme is still available to accommodate the rest of the message. For example, senteces 10 and 11 below can be reprhased in order to omitt the human subject and to condense the message:

> *(10) Ellos inmigran porque tienen educacion y pueden ganar dinero bueno en trabajos decentas, (11) y no tienen barreras de estereotipos por ser de Este de Europa, por ejemplo.* (Student B) [*ellos* refers to western Europeans]
>
> *La inmigracion de Europa occidental no afronta trabajos precariospor falta de cualificaciones ni sufre de estereotipos.*

Thus the teaching of lexical items not only must include processes and their corresponding nominalization, but it must be accompanied by explanations of the communicative effects that the use of each kind has in the text as a whole.

Further, it was seen that in journalistic reports human participants include different authorities, such as regional government, local police, central government and so forth. This again requires a good understanding of Spain's political organization into autonomous regions, provinces and towns and of how authority is distributed among the different institutions. This kind of knowledge is obviously paramount to be able to understand and complete reading tasks, which are normally selected from the local press of the countries where the language is spoken. Moreover, it is expected that references to the roles and responsibilities of the pertinent authorities are made in the evaluative section of the essays.

The inclusion of these linguistic features into the teaching content of language courses would provide learners with the linguistic resources needed to create the desired communicative function. Further, it will make them aware of the key role that theme plays in the text construal, so that they can further explore this structure in a creative way.

Besides writing and reading, speaking is a further language skill, which carries considerable weight in the assessment of advanced language courses. While language

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grammars in general pay no particular attention to language use, some mention certain aspects, such as the so-called pro-drop movement.

It has been repeatedly stated that Spanish pro-drop movement results in the omission of the subject. In the types of written text studied here, the subjects are exclusively in the third person. The ellipsis of the subject tends to take place in the second of two consecutive clauses, which often include other ideational content such as circumstances. In longer chains containing the same subject, the subject is re-introduced mostly as a full lexical synonym or related term. In conversations a large proportion of subjects used include the first and the second person and can be omitted. One reason given for this is the fact that Spanish is a morphologically rich language. However, the conversation analysed in section 5.3 has shown a larger number of personal pronoun subjects (*yo* and *tú*) overtly expressed. The personal pronoun subjects are used at the start of each speaker intervention; they are used as pointers to keep the conversation moving among speakers. The fact that conversations are predominantly interactive means that the thematic elements are used to serve that purpose. This is evident in the use of the fronted personal pronouns in questions and is a further proof of the correlation between theme and purpose. The implications for teaching and learning are indeed significant. Speaking skills are introduced in schools in the form of questions and answers. This type of interaction is different from conversations. In questions and answers the interaction is highly restricted because one person asks the question and the other person responds. The interaction is pre-arranged by the defined roles of each of the speakers. In the typical role-play that learners do at school, they are given a fixed role with clear directions. Role-plays tend to include a question but there is no real interaction; it is a sequence of controlled exchanges. The current speaking examinations at advanced level include a two-people conversation, where roles are pre-established: the examiner asks questions and the learner provides the answers. The questions are not fully rehearsed as it is the case in schools, but the learner has a considerable idea as regards the nature of the questions. As seen in section 5.3, the response to a question may omit, and often does, the part that is included in the question, producing a simple linear thematic pattern. This type of interaction is different from spontaneous conversations. The conversation studied in section 5.3 includes several speakers, but it is reasonable to anticipate that first and

second personal pronoun subjects may be used to carry out the interaction regardless of the number of speakers. The type of instruction that tutors offer learners in order to respond successfully to questions includes the subject omission. Emphasis is placed on this feature because in English the response to a question follows the same word order arrangement as statements: S + V. But if we want to train learners to communicate in a more interactive setting, the language needed to keep the flow of the conversation is different. The thematic analysis of the spoken data displays the use of personal pronouns subjects to refer to speakers and addressees, and the demonstrative (adjective and pronouns) and clitic pronouns to refer to the conversation topics, which are thematised in a large proportion of the exchanges. Thus in order to provide learners with the linguistic tools required in interacting settings, we need to incorporate the personal pronouns in the teaching syllabus at the relevant stage. This does not mean the teaching of the paradigm but its use and function. Given that the use of the third person of the personal pronoun (*él, ella*) is hardly ever used with a deictic or referential meaning, it is necessary to place a great deal of attention on the first and second personal pronoun and on the demonstrative (*este, ese*, etc). Further, it is necessary to underline the interactive-deictic value of these pronouns, so that learners are selective in their use. For example, in writing such as essays, which contain no interaction, personal views are expressed well by using interpersonal markers such as thematised comments, which do not include personal pronouns.

Another set of pronouns that are vital in the flow of conversations are clitics, which together with demonstratives play a key role in maintaining the topic of the conversation over several exchanges.

This distinction in language use and function is vital to make an adequate use of the communicative potential of the grammatical system. Usage should become an important part of the grammatical manuals and textbooks. Learners of Spanish have limited numbers of manuals on academic writing. One exception to this trend is a three-volume manual, *Manual práctico de escritura académica* (2000) by Estrella Montolío. This manual devotes an entire section to reference, where personal pronouns are included. However, there is no mention of the fact that personal pronoun subjects of the

3rd person are hardly ever used referentially. They are given the same weight as the demonstrative *este, esta, esto* (Montolío 2000: 36).

The subject ellipsis is also explained in terms of the possibility of subject omission after being introduced in the first sentence, but there is no mention of other content occurring in theme or of the fact that the subject tends to be reintroduced at fairly fixed intervals in the form of a full lexical item. Further, the effects that empty themes resulting from subject ellipsis may have in the construal of the text are also omitted.

In sum, it is important to train students according to the communicative purpose that we may try to achieve at a given time; it is also essential to make apparent to them the communicative potential of the linguistic features which are available within the grammatical system.

8. Conclusions

8.1 Conclusions Drawn from the Analyses

An attempt has been made in this study to identify the effect that thematic pressure has on word order realizations in Spanish and the possible implications for teaching and learning Spanish as a foreign language.

The application of theme analysis to Spanish has posed some problems for analysts, including issues related to theme boundaries and the analysis of verb initial sentences. The approach which has been taken here considers the clause as a binary unit made up of the theme and the rheme; the main verb of the clause constitutes the first rhematic element; in verb-initial clauses, the theme has been considered as empty.

The fact that language use is a fundamental principle of the Systemic model and that theme enjoys a fixed position in the clause makes thematic analysis a suitable tool to study word order variations in Spanish. The thematic analyses of selected texts have shown certain trends in word order arrangements that are sensitive to both register and purpose.

The study of written texts, which include narrative fiction, newspaper articles and academic texts, has disclosed a clear preference for subjects to occur in theme in declarative clauses. In contiguous sentences exhibiting the same theme, the subject is omitted in the second sentence; other elements such as conjunctive adjuncts and conjunctions may occur in theme; in longer chains of constant theme the subject is reintroduced at fairly regular intervals. But in order to avoid lexical repetition, there is a marked tendency to use different glosses to refer to a given subject. Thus the use of personal pronouns as referential subjects is indeed very limited. Notice that the omitted subject is also considered part of the theme structure.

The noun group functioning as subject may contain elaborations made up of adjectives, prepositional phrases, relative clauses and appositions. These expansions add information, which can be textually given, textually new, or which serve to anchor the

noun head. Thus the theme may contain a minimal given or inferable element in its structure, showing a clear independence between theme and the degree of givenness.

Besides the subject, circumstantial adjuncts and dependent clauses are also expressed in theme and serve not only an orienting function but also ensure progression.

Themes containing no subjects have been found in reporting clauses; in instances where the theme is made up of a prepositional phrase, which includes a human participant; in chains of simple linear thematic patterns; and in impersonal and *se-* constructions. The theme can be carried out from the previous sentence and consequently it appears empty; also, another element may occur in thematic position, as in the case of prepositional phrases containing human participants. However, in the case of reporting clauses, which frequently express the subject in the rheme, and in chains of simple linear themes the empty theme tends to be the norm. This can be explained on the basis that in reporting clauses the reported clause provides a kind of backdrop for the reporting clause to occur, thus the theme is felt to be redundant. In the case of simple linear thematic chains, the omitted theme comes from the rheme of immediate preceding sentence; this proximity enables the omission of the theme; if the omitted theme is not the subject, this may occur in the rheme.

Complements in theme are restricted nearly exclusively to clitic pronouns, which can occur together with the subject before the verb and to cases of simple linear theme found in conversational Spanish.

As regards differences among text types, a perceptible difference was found in the types of participant that are realized as subject; while in narrative and journalistic articles subjects are selected mainly among human participants, in academic texts participants are largely made up of abstract nouns. These differences in theme content also extend to the proportion and the type of textual elements in theme. In narrative (both fiction and journalistic texts) the number of conjunctive elements (conjunctions and conjunctive adjuncts) in theme is relatively low; further, conjunctive elements are represented mainly by the additive kind. This low number of textual markers seems to correlate with a considerably large number of circumstantial adjuncts in theme, which contributes to the textual organization of the text. While both academic texts, SP1 and EN1, contain a high percentage of textual themes, SP1 was clearly organised in two parts, the first of which

corresponds to the expository part and contains a lower number of textual markers than the second part.

This difference in overtly expressing the relationship between sentences seems to indicate that the writer in the specialised texts interprets the information for the reader, for example, as cause and effect. The fact that in narrative and exposition the events are presented with less intervention may be explained by the fact that the novelist or the reporter wishes to give a sense of objectivity. In specialized texts, the authors wish to present, defend and justify their own theories and views.

A further difference observed in theme content concerns the frequency of interpersonal themes. In journalistic reports the interpersonal themes are restricted mainly to sayers, realized by a prepositional phrase and occasionally as the subject of the projecting clause. In the expository part of the Spanish academic text the number of interpersonal themes was much lower than in the analytical part. Also, interpersonal themes are realized as thematised comment and not personal projected clauses. The absence of personal pronouns means that there is no interaction between writer and reader.

As regards thematic patterns, constant theme is the most recurring thematic pattern in narrative fiction and news reports. Themes that fall outside the thematic pattern tend to be introduced as multiple or heavy themes, which serve to establish a link to the preceding part of the text. However, key themes and themes encoding sociocultural references are often (re)introduced without any cohesive device. In the academic texts the preferred thematic pattern is the derived theme. This means that the experiential element in a given theme is related to the overall topic and that the reader is expected to have considerable knowledge of the topic.

The analysis of the spoken data has shown that first and second personal pronouns occur overtly expressed in theme. Although the experiential meaning encoded by the personal pronoun is expressed in the morphology of the verb, they are expressed at the start of each speaker's utterance with a clear deictic sense in order to mark the interaction. The use of the personal pronoun subject extends to questions, which exhibit the subject in initial position, whereas in responses the personal pronoun subjects are not expressed because the question itself identifies the speaker's turn.

The second most common thematic element found was complements (objects), mainly realized as clitic and deictic pronouns. The extracts contain only a single example of a full lexical object in theme.

The thematic progression patterns revealed by the analysis include constant theme and simple linear theme. Simple linear theme occurs in stretches where the speaker engages in a short narration and in responses to questions. An alternative wording for responses was also found; this wording implies that the answer maintains the same order of elements as the question; that is, the requested information is followed by the rest of the clause.

In comparison with written texts, there are two distinct differences; firstly, the length of the theme slot in chains of constant thematic pattern is considerably shorter; also, there are a higher number of empty themes in the conversation in comparison with the written texts, which exhibit longer thematic slots, particularly in specialised texts. Secondly, conversational Spanish seems to make more use of simple linear theme patterns. As said above, in the simple linear thematic pattern if the omitted theme does not correspond with the subject, the subject may be expressed in the rheme. The relative frequency of this thematic pattern may explain the association that has been made between spoken register and subject placement.

Although we have not offered an exhaustive treatment of word order variations in Spanish, the results of the thematic analysis seem to support a strong correlation between thematic pattern of progression and register, on the one hand, and between thematic pattern and linguistic realization, on the other. This illustrates the important role that theme plays in creating the desired meaning, and therefore it explains the demands that theme poses in the arrangement of the elements in the first part of the clause.

8.2 Implications for Teaching and Learning

The study of the results of thematic analysis of the students' work has enabled us to single out precise features that make the work produced by the students more or less successful for the task at hand. Some recurring problems found in the students' work

include the introduction of new ideational content, the range of textual and modal elements, and the staging of thematic elements across the text. Out of these, the greatest difficulties tend to involve the use of textual themes. A set of suggestions intended to address these problems has been given in Chapter 7. This list is far from complete, but it has been compiled as an illustration of how the method can be applied for practical purposes. Further, possible practical applications of thematic analysis include the use of thematic analysis to evaluate the amount of relevant ideational content included in the work produced by students; also, to carry out an initial assessment of learners' linguistic ability; and to test and assess in internal and national examinations.

The use of theme analysis as a teaching and assessment tool has obvious advantages. A thematic analysis of real occurring data provides specific linguistic features needed for specific communicative purposes. This can then be used in deciding the language content of courses; thus we ensure that the language content covered in the classrooms correlates with the communicative functions that learners will be required to carry out outside the educational environment. Further, the theme analysis or an analysis of the other two metafunctions, provides a clear set of linguistic features that can help to measure objectively a learner's performance.

8.3 Implications for Further Research

The practicality of the application of thematic analysis has caused some disagreement among researchers; these discrepancies extend to Spanish. In this research the approach taken differs from that taken by other analysts working with Spanish and English; however, the results have shown some common characteristic features in line with those researches. This seems to confirm the validity of the functional method to study texts comparatively and it corroborates the usefulness of theme analysis in studying Spanish texts with a practical application purpose.

Although the results concerning word order realizations in Spanish that have been obtained here need to be contrasted and corroborated with more data, it is reasonable to claim that thematic analysis has proved to be an optimal tool for such study. A few

tentative suggestions include the application of thematic analysis to studying word order realization in different types of text in order to obtain the linguistic features relevant to their communicative function. Further, the existence of theme at different ranks (below and above the clause) provides a suitable model to study other word order realizations such as adjective placement. Potential findings could also add to the debate on word order in Spanish.

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