

# *Constituent order in Spanish: a Functional Grammar perspective*

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## ABSTRACT

In typological terms, it seems clear that Spanish should be classified as a language with a dominant SVO order (see for instance Siewierska 1997:551). Despite this general assumption, constituent order in Spanish also admits considerable variation in the position of its sentence constituents, for which the language has acquired a reputation of having a fairly flexible constituent order.

In this paper, I refer to the linearisation patterns which occur in Spanish as alternatives to the dominant SVO order and consider them in the light of the Functional Grammar model (as in Dik 1997), particularly in the area of special sentence positions, functional patterns and pragmatic functions. The scope of this study is the declarative main clause.

Although the study of Spanish constituent order has been approached by scholars working in different linguistic frameworks, there are, to the best of my knowledge, no studies on Spanish constituent order from a Functional Grammar approach in line with those for other languages (e.g. Hannay 1991, Siewierska 1998, Stanchev 1997 and Vismans 1997).

**KEY WORDS:** constituent order, Spanish, Functional Grammar, pragmatic functions.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is an attempt to provide an account of constituent order in Spanish in terms of the Functional Grammar (FG) model as outlined in Dik (1997) and, in particular, the area of special sentence

positions, functional patterns and pragmatic functions.<sup>1</sup> I propose functional patterns which can account for the different linearisation patterns in Spanish as well as special sentence positions which may be filled by pragmatic functions such as Focus and Topic. The scope of this study is the declarative main clause.

Although the study of Spanish constituent order has been approached by scholars working in different linguistic frameworks,<sup>2</sup> there are, to the best of my knowledge, no studies on Spanish constituent order from an FG approach in the line with those for English (Hannay 1991, Connolly 1991), Polish (Siewierska 1998), Bulgarian (Stanchev 1997) or Dutch (Vismans 1997). As a study of a special constituent order construction in Spanish, however, it is worth mentioning Downing (1997), which focuses on left dislocation, with particular reference to the discourse-pragmatic functions of this construction in spoken European Spanish.

Bakker (2001) points out that within the FG model little attention has been paid to expression rules, which convert underlying predications into actual linguistic expressions, in comparison with a greater amount of discussion on underlying representations and, more recently, on issues dealing with pragmatics and discourse. The author argues for a need to develop this component of expression rules further: “all components distinguished within the grammar models or speaker/hearer models proposed by the theory should be developed in a uniform fashion” (p.16). This study is an attempt to enrich the component of expression rules in FG by looking at the linearisation patterns of a variable word order language and at how these can be handled in this theoretical framework.

## 2. THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES

### 2.1. Principles of constituent order and special positions in FG

In FG, ‘placement rules’ are responsible for assigning positions to the constituents of specific languages in predetermined, language-specific functional patterns. The FG approach does not assume that a given language necessarily has only a single “basic”

order but is instead “fully compatible with the co-existence of different patterns or templates, to be used in different conditions and for different purposes” (Dik 1997: 394).

Dik (1997: 395f) proposes a “multifunctional theory of constituent ordering”, based on a number of “interacting and possibly competing principles and preferences” and which the placement rules generally obey. He presents nine general principles (GPs) and a total of sixteen specific principles (SPs) conditioning the constituent order in language. The idea is that none of the principles has absolute validity but that, taken together, they may reduce the number of conditions required for describing the constituent order of individual languages. A fundamental GP, for our purposes, is GP7, the *Principle of Pragmatic Highlighting*: “Constituents with special pragmatic functionality (...) are preferably placed in ‘special positions’, including, at least, the clause-initial position” (*ibid*: 403). With respect to the SPs, special reference should be made here to SP4 and SP5, which deal with the sentence initial position P1, a universally relevant position, “used for special purposes, including the placement of constituents with Topic or Focus function” (SP4, *ibid*: 408). SP5 states that “[s]ince the subject is the prime GivenTopic candidate, it will often be placed in P1” (*ibid*: 409). Finally, SP7, a reformulation of “LIPOC” (Language-Independent Preferred Order of Constituents), first presented in Dik (1978) and also relevant here, states that “[o]ther things being equal, constituents prefer to be placed in an order of increasing complexity” (*ibid*: 411).

Dik (1997) also admits that languages may have other such special positions like P1 inside an ordering template, used for similar purposes. Other special positions have been stipulated for a number of languages like Polish, Dutch and Hungarian.

### 3. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF SPANISH CONSTITUENT ORDER

#### 3.1. Introduction

Spanish has been generally characterised as a language with a basic SVO order (see, for instance, Siewierska 1997:551). On the one hand, SVO is often assumed to be the unmarked dominant order in transitive main clauses with a full NP as subject and object<sup>3</sup> and, on the other, Spanish complies with a number of characteristics usually associated with the SVO language type and common in the Romance language group in which most languages are also of an SVO type (see Arnaiz 1997: 48-49).

Despite this general assumption, main clause constituent order in Spanish also admits considerable variation in the position of its main sentence constituents, especially with respect to the position of the subject.

A very characteristic feature of Spanish (and other Romance languages like Italian and Portuguese) is its ability to omit the subject when this represents given information or when the morphological encoding of the verbal form makes this presence unnecessary.

### 3.2. Constituent order in declarative main clauses

Transitive clauses in Spanish typically show an SVO order but other orders are possible under certain conditions. In general VO is consistently used in Spanish when the object is a full NP; on the contrary, VS order is fairly common in an array of constructions. Notice that, in some of these, VS order is the unmarked, rather than marked, order.

One typical exception to the VO-order rule in Spanish are constructions which bring, mainly for pragmatic reasons, non-subject arguments to the initial position, such as left dislocations and topicalisations. In these, there is a general tendency to postpone the subject:

- (1) a. [El ingenio es una habilidad brillante, muy atractiva, pero muy tramposa.  
'Wit is a brilliant, very attractive ability, but very cheating as well.']  
*Lo mismo pienso yo.*<sup>4</sup> (HV: 22)  
The same think I  
'I think the same'
- b. [(About the means of transport in Russia)]

Sí hay muchos autobuses y trolebuses.  
'There are indeed many buses and trolleybuses.']  
Por cierto, que *muchos de ellos los conducen*  
By the way many of them them.ACCUS drive.3PL  
*las mujeres, claro.* (CCM: 157)  
the women, naturally.  
'By the way, many of them are driven by women, naturally.'

In left dislocations such as (1b), there is an obligatory resumptive clitic pronoun which is co-referential with the dislocated complement. Constructions of the type of both (1a) and (1b) are primarily motivated by the assignment of Topic function to the fronted NP and of Focus to a postverbal constituent, often the subject (*yo* in (1a) and *las mujeres* in (1b)). However, it is also common to bring non-subject arguments to initial position when they are to be contrasted and are assigned the function of Contrastive Focus (cf. Martínez Caro 1998).<sup>5</sup>

In other cases, however, the fronted constituent, with no resumptive pronoun, has a strong focusing effect. This construction has been called focalisation (cf. Arnaiz 1997. See also Escobar Álvarez 1995 and Zubizarreta 1999):

- (2) [(About the place where the informant spent the summer in Spain, in the mountains near Madrid)  
¿En qué parte de la sierra?  
'Where exactly in the mountains?']  
*En Cercedilla hemos veraneado cuarenta años.*  
In Cercedilla have.1PL spent-the-summer forty years  
(CCM: 260-61)  
'In Cercedilla we have spent our summer holidays for forty years.'

In FG terms, the function of New Focus is assigned to the preverbal constituent in (2), *En Cercedilla*.

OVS order is preferred or even required with experiencer predicates (O = experiencer, S = stimulus). This order seems to be based on a combination of semantic, pragmatic and syntactic factors. On the one hand, it is based on the semantic nature of the verb (cf. Mendikoetxea 1999: 1614), and a universal tendency to place the entity receiving the sensation or inner state (experiencer) in first position:

- (3) *Me gusta mucho la idea de 'entrenamiento'.* (HV: 108)  
Me likes very-much the idea of 'training'.  
'I like the idea of 'training' very much.'

A similar motivation is present in intransitive clauses with presentative or other unaccusative verbs with unmarked VS order (cf. (4a-c)),<sup>6</sup> such as *se*-passive constructions (cf. (4d)):

- (4) a. *Existen tres mil especialidades matemáticas.* (HV: 95)  
Exist.3PL three thousand mathematic specialisations  
'There exist three thousand specialisations within mathematics.'
- b. *por eso apareció el aburrimiento.* (HV: 25)  
for that reason appeared (the) boredom  
'For that reason, boredom appeared.'
- c. *Ha pasado la época del ateísmo militante.* (HV: 184)  
Has passed the time of the militating atheism  
'The time of a militating atheism has passed.'
- d. *En este libro se desvela, al fin, el misterio.* (HV: 93)  
In this book PART.PAS revealed, finally, the mystery  
'In this book, the mystery is revealed, at last.'

In pragmatic terms, the postverbal position of the NP subject is considered to reflect its special pragmatic status: both in experiencer predicates (3) and other instances of unaccusative predicates, illustrated in examples (4a-d), the postverbal NP is considered to express the New Topic (or New Focus) function (Siewierska 1991: 161, Martínez Caro 1999: 249). Some of these VS clauses can also occur, in fact, with SV order (e.g. *La idea de entrenamiento me gusta mucho*; *El aburrimiento apareció por eso*; *La época del ateísmo militante ha pasado*; *El misterio se desvela, al fin, en este libro* but not in (4a): *\*Tres mil especialidades matemáticas existen*). In general, VS order favours athetic interpretation with the postverbal subject focalised, while SV favours a categorial one, with the subject being regarded as the Topic (or Contrastive Focus).

Finally, another common VS pattern is one with extraposed (typically clausal) subject in constructions reporting an attitude or stance which is often "not overtly attributed to any person" (Biber *et*

al. 1999: 661). The main verb is *ser* ('to be'), or a similar attributive verb, followed by a predicative complement (*Es fácil.../interesante..., Parece importante...* —'It is easy.../interesting..., It seems important...'). These constructions lack the initial dummy element that is obligatory in languages such as English (dummy *it*) or Dutch (*het*):

- (5) a. *Es verdad que somos seres contradictorios.* (HV: 78)  
Is true that are.1PL contradictory beings  
'It is true that we are contradictory beings.'
- b. *Es curiosa la relación con el tiempo.* (HV: 83)  
Is curious the relation with time  
'The relation with time is curious.'

A large number of these constructions reporting an attitude or stance have a clausal subject which tends to be a much more complex element than the initial verb and complement. Therefore, following the principle of LIPOC (Dik's SP7), this clausal subject gets placed in final position. However, less complex NP subjects also tend to appear finally, as in (5b).

Personal pronouns in Spanish may be stressed or unstressed. Unstressed personal pronouns (clitics) usually appear in the immediately preverbal position, as independent words (*Me lo dio* ('To-me it he-gave' = 'He gave it to me')). However, they occur postverbally with non-finite forms such as infinitives and present participles or with imperatives, attached to the verbal form as a compound word (*Dámelo* ('Give-it-to-me')).

#### 4. AN FG ANALYSIS OF SPANISH CONSTITUENT ORDER

##### 4.1. The functional patterns of Spanish

In an earlier study (Martínez Caro 1989), I argued for a pattern of the Spanish clause in which the first position, a preverbal position, could be filled by any argument of the verb, or by a satellite, or it could be left empty. It was also assumed that the verb occupied a fixed

position and that the subject could appear both preverbally or postverbally. Following Groos and Bok-Bennema (1986: 68), this pattern could be represented as follows:

(6) (XP) V XP\*

This pattern assumes that the verb in Spanish is either placed in first or second position in the clause and that the first position can be filled by only one argument, which may be the subject or another constituent.

Translating this idea to FG, and trying to present a more detailed pattern to account for Spanish constituent order, we can suggest the following functional pattern for Spanish:

(7) P1 V S O X

In this pattern, V stands for verb, S for subject, O for Object and X “stands for non-Subj, non-Obj constituents (‘oblique’ arguments, satellites)” (Dik 1997: 420). Notice that in a more detailed description of Spanish constituent order, further X positions may be required (cf. Dik 1997: 421), mainly to account for the variable order position of satellites. However, in this study we will mainly focus on argument positions and, therefore, the template in (7) can suffice. Notice also that the positions S, O and X may be left empty. For the moment, we can characterise P1 in Spanish as a special position which may be home to verbal arguments such as the subject and object, and other non-object arguments including ‘oblique’ arguments and satellites.

Let us now consider the types of clause which may be captured by this functional pattern. The SVO pattern, the dominant pattern in Spanish, can be captured by (7), assuming, as SP5 does, that the subject is placed in P1, by virtue of its being assigned the Topic function, e.g.:

(8) *Los diez libros que ha escrito Marina en la última década*    *contienen,*  
The ten books that has written Marina in the last decade    contain,  
*entre otros muchos hallazgos,*    *algunas claves*    *para vivir mejor.*  
among many other findings,    some keys    to live better  
(HV: 15)    P1 V X O



‘The ten books that Marina has written in the last decade contain, among other findings, some clues for a better life.’

Constructions with a fronting of a non-subject constituent can be also captured by (7). The fronted constituent, which provides topical information, is placed in P1 and the subject is either postverbal or left unmentioned, as an implicit element:

- (9) a. Lo mismo pienso yo. = (1a) P1 V S
- b. [¿Hay alguna manera de justificar que una solución es mejor que otras? Creo que sí.  
‘Is there any way to argue that one solution is better than others? I think there is.’]  
*De eso trataré en el próximo libro.*  
About that deal.1SG.FUT in the next book P1 V X  
(HV: 203)  
‘About that I will write in my next book.’
- c. *Con esta frase comienza Marina El laberinto sentimental’.*  
With this sentence begins Marina *El laberinto sentimental*  
(HV: 77) P1 V S O  
‘With this sentence Marina begins *El laberinto sentimental* (*The Sentimental Labyrinth*).’
- d. *Lo que hay que evitar son los excesos.* (HV: 90) P1 V S  
What one has to avoid are the excesses  
‘What one should avoid are excesses.’

The left dislocation construction exemplified in (1b) (*muchos de ellos los conducen las mujeres*) has been traditionally analysed as having a peripheral element (in this case *muchos de ellos*), set off from the clause proper and assigned to the position P2, in line with the same analysis for the construction in other languages (e.g. English). I believe, however, that the initial element in this construction in Spanish should be rather analysed as assigned to P1, by its topical status and similar function to the types of fronted elements occurring in (9), and so captured by (7) as well. This left dislocation construction, highly grammaticalised in the language, is distinguished from the ‘Hanging Topic’ construction (cf. Zubizarreta 1999: 4220), exemplified in (10):

- (10) a. [About the Spanish town of Gijón]  
*Luego, la playa tumultuaria, aquello era estar codo con*  
Then, the tumultuous beach, that was being “elbow against  
*codo literalmente las personas en la playa.* (CCM: 26)  
elbow” literally the people in the beach  
‘Then, the crowded beach, that was like people being literally packed in  
the beach.’
- b. [Entonces, lo que sí confío yo mucho más,  
‘And then, what I trust much more,']  
*la labor de la prensa, creo mucho más en ella*  
the work of the press believe.1SG much more in it  
*con muchos peros, naturalmente.* (CCM: 39)  
with many reservations,naturally  
‘The function of the press, I believe in it much more, although with  
reservations, naturally.’

Syntactic and discourse differences between the left dislocation in (1b) and the Hanging Topic construction in (10) justify considering them as two different constructions. In discourse terms, the dislocated element in (10) is closely associated with a change of topic in a given discourse setting (Zubizarreta 1999: 4220); in syntactic terms, there is a clear difference in the relation between the dislocated element and the coreferential term within the clause proper and with the whole clause in general (cf. Martínez Caro 1999: 109-110). Thus, the constituents *la playa tumultuaria* and *la labor de la prensa* in (10), referring to a stressed pronoun in the clause (*aquello* in (10a) and *ella* in (10b)), rather than to a clitic pronoun as in the left dislocation construction, are placed in P2.

Also captured by (7), and included in this category, are pseudo-cleft sentences with an initial non-object argument *Q*-clause and a postverbal NP subject, as in (9d).

The functional pattern in (7) also accounts for the group of presentative constructions or with other unaccusative verbs in clauses which present a fronted constituent which functions as the Stager (Hannay 1991), as in (11) or (4b). Syntactically impersonal constructions, which lack a subject in Spanish and may be preceded by a circumstantial adjunct, have a similar function in this language, as in (12):



preverbally. If the subject continues to occupy preverbal position then the language qualifies as P1SV...; if it does not, then the language can be interpreted as P1VS... (cf. Siewierska 1991: 222). The pattern posited in (13) attempts to capture examples in Spanish in which, indeed, SV order remains with a preverbal constituent (satellite or non-subject argument) in P1, such as the following:

- (14) [En otras culturas emplean demasiados circunloquios para explicar cosas simples y consideran que es de mala educación ‘ir al grano’.  
‘In other cultures they use too many circumlocutions to explain simple things and they consider it rude to ‘go straight to the point’.’]  
*Para nosotros eso es afectación, hipocresía y falta de sinceridad.*  
For us that is pretension, hypocrisy and lack of sincerity  
(HV: 124) P1 S V X  
‘For us that is pretension, hypocrisy and lack of sincerity.’
- (15) [El pragmatismo de la cultura occidental está despreciando los modos, los modales, los circunloquios.  
‘Pragmatism of Western culture is disregarding manners, circumlocutions.’]  
*Con ello la convivencia se endurece.* (HV: 124) P1 S V  
With it the cohabitation hardens itself (lit.: PART. hardens)  
‘With this, cohabitation hardens itself.’
- (16) [¿Me puedes hablar un poco de este Madrid que va creciendo tanto?  
‘Can you tell me something about this city of Madrid that is growing so much?’]  
Pues *este crecimiento en Madrid yo le veo normal*  
Well this growth in Madrid I it.ACCUS see.1SG normal  
¿no? (CCM: 91) P1 S c V X<sup>7</sup>  
don’t you think?  
‘Well, this growth in Madrid, I see it as something natural, don’t you think?’

#### 4.1.1. Verb-initial clauses

So far we have considered clause patterns in Spanish in which the P1 position was filled by the subject, as “prime candidate” for Given Topic (see sect. 2.1), another verbal argument such as an object or a non-object argument, or a satellite. Within satellites, we make a distinction between level 1 and 2 satellites (cf. Dik 1997: 87), which

can be placed in P1, and attitudinal and illocutionary satellites (level 3 and level 4 satellites), which –if in initial position— are placed in P2.

As we saw, it is not uncommon for Spanish to have a verb as initial element of a clause. This may occur when the subject is omitted, because it refers to one of the speech participants, as in (17a), or to a textually given entity, as in (17b):

- (17) a. *Creo que las mujeres valoran menos el ingenio*  
Think.1SG that the women value less the wit  
*que los hombres.*  
than the men. (HV: 22)  
'I think that women value wit to a lesser extent than men do.'
- b. [About the lexicographer Anna Wierzbicka]  
*Ha dedicado muchos años a estudiar lo que llama*  
Has dedicated many years to study what calls  
*'universales lingüísticos'.* (HV: 127)  
'linguistic universals'  
'She has dedicated many years to study what she calls "linguistic universals".'

There are also verb-initial clauses which have an unmarked VS order. A case in point are presentative constructions and those with other unaccusative verbs. In the previous section, we have seen examples of some of these constructions with a satellite or non-object argument in first position. If these elements do not appear or do not occur preverbally, the clause is introduced by a verb:

- (18) Existen tres mil especialidades matemáticas. = (4a)

The same pattern applies to constructions reporting an attitude or stance with the order VXS:

- (19) Es verdad que somos seres contradictorios. = (5a)

Finally, some verb-initial clauses may exhibit a VS order for pragmatic reasons, with the main purpose of assigning a special position to the Focus constituent, which is the subject:

- (20) [Las mismas expresiones que durante el noviazgo eran interpretadas benévolamente, pueden llegar a ser interpretadas malévolamente cuando las cosas no van bien.  
'The same expressions that during a courtship were interpreted positively, can become to be interpreted negatively when things go wrong.']  
*No ha cambiado la expresión, ha cambiado*  
Not has changed the expression, has changed  
*el sesgo afectivo que dirige la interpretación.* (HV: 127)  
the emotional bias that directs the interpretation  
'It is not the expression that has changed, it is the emotional bias directing the interpretation that has changed.'

In (20), the two postverbal subjects (*la expresión* and *el sesgo afectivo que dirige la interpretación*) are clearly focalised and contrastive. The relation between the two and with their respective predicates is one showing a counter-presuppositional contrast (cf. Dik 1997: 332; Martínez Caro 1999: 147-150).

Another type of verb-initial clause is what in Spanish is taken to be a pseudo-cleft construction with the *Q*-clause in final position and the immediately postverbal constituent (the subject) in Focus:

- (21) *Fue Nietzsche quien definió al ser humano*  
Was Nietzsche who defined to-the human being  
*como el animal que puede prometer.*<sup>8</sup> (HV: 105)  
as the animal that can promise  
'It was Nietzsche that defined the human being as the animal that can make a promise.'

The Focus here (*Nietzsche*) is a New Focus. The 'heavy' *Q*-clause is positioned finally following LIPOC.

The question now arises as to the functional pattern which can account for these verb-initial constructions, and more particularly, with respect to how P1 should be filled: (a) is P1 left empty?, or (b) does the verb get placed in P1?

Opting for (a) or (b) depends largely on how the P1 position is conceived. Apart from designated elements such as subordinators, relative pronouns and *Q*-words going in P1 (cf. Dik 1997: 421) –a case that does not concern us here directly as these do not occur in declarative main clauses— P1 is mainly conceived in FG as a functionally motivated position which houses elements explicitly

placed there for “special purposes, including the placement of constituents with Topic or Focus function” (Dik’s SP4, cf. 2.1.). Since the verb in verb-initial clauses does not seem to play any special pragmatic role, and does not occupy the initial position for the same purposes, I adopt here (a) and assume that, in verb-initial clauses in Spanish, P1 is left empty in the functional pattern.<sup>9</sup> Notice also that Dik does not mention specifically that P1 has to be filled in all languages and neither does he seem to consider cases where P1 may be filled by a verb. See also Siewierska (1991: 223), who states that:

Given that an initial constituent may be in P1 or in its patterned position, initial location is not a sufficient criterion for identifying P1. The determination of whether or not a constituent is in P1 is particularly problematic in the case of variable word order languages which appear to allow multiple placement in P1.

As we have seen, a powerful reason for placing an element in P1 is that it is assigned the function Topic. Thus, the subject, as the “prime candidate for Topic”, or a non-subject argument are frequently placed preverbally in Spanish if they are elements which refer back to an already mentioned referent or have a linking-up function with what has come in the previous discourse. Satellites that are placed initially, followed by the subject or verb, often have a function of setting the scene, temporally or spatially for example. Less frequently, we might also find examples whose fronted argument is assigned the Focus function. These are usually objects or oblique arguments; subjects which are focalised in Spanish tend to appear postverbally.

With this in mind, we can propose the following rules for filling in P1 in Spanish (in declarative main clauses):

- (R0) P1 may only contain a single constituent.
- (R1) P1 may contain a constituent with Given Topic, SubTop, Contrastive (Parallel) Focus or New Focus function.
- (R2) P1 may contain an element with X function, where X = some satellite.
- (R3) If (R1) or (R2) do not apply, P1 may be left empty.

P1 is conceived of as a functionally motivated position whereby elements that go there are basically sent there for their special

pragmatic status. In verb-initial clauses, P1 is left empty and the verb occupies its determined slot in the pattern.

## 4.2. Some problems

### 4.2.1. The analysis of clitics

Objects tend to appear quite consistently in a postverbal position, except in pragmatically-motivated frontings (as in left dislocations, topicalisations or focalisations). As we have seen, the order of clitics does not conform to this rule and they are instead always placed in an immediately preverbal position. It would seem counterintuitive to propose two different functional patterns (based on SVO or SOV) for the different positions of the ‘same’ object in the following examples:

- (22) a. *Yo valoro mucho la paciencia*  
I value very much (the) patience  
*como gran virtud creadora.*  
as a great creative virtue
- b. *Yo la valoro mucho como gran virtud creadora.* (HV: 106)  
I it.ACCUS value very much as a great creative virtue

Apart from that in (22b), other contexts where clitics commonly appear are constructions such as the left dislocation construction, in which the clitic element refers to the dislocated element (as in (1b)), and with experiencer predicates where the initial clitic describes the experiencer of the affectivity process, typically coinciding in Spanish with the syntactic object (as in (3)). In the latter case, the clitic frequently occupies the clause-initial position rendering an OVS order typical of these constructions. A possible analysis of the clitic in these constructions is to assign it to the initial position P1. However, at least two facts argue against this analysis. One is the existence of examples such as (23a-b), which involve ‘clitic doubling’ (cf. Fernández Soriano 1999) and where the presence of the PP dative



element in initial position serves to reinforce the experiencer by assigning it a contrastive or emphatic meaning:

- (23) a. *A mí no me gusta la palabra.* (HV: 71)  
To me not me.DAT likes the word  
'I don't like the word.'
- b. *A la gente le gusta sentir.* (HV: 77)  
To the people.SG DAT.3SG like.3SG feeling  
'People like feeling.'

If we consider that clitics are assigned to the P1 position, then these types of construction in which another element occurs before the clitic, which we would normally want to place in P1 as in left dislocations, are problematic, unless we admit the possibility that P1 is multiply filled. As we have seen, the possibility of P1 being multiply filled in variable word order languages has been admitted by scholars such as Siewierska (1991: 223). However, for the moment I will continue to assume the hypothesis for the structure of the Spanish clause given above (4.1.) that states that P1 can be filled by a single constituent or be left empty. A second argument against this analysis is that, as in the case of the verb in verb-initial clauses, the preverbal position of the clitic does not have a pragmatic motivation but is placed there for purely grammatical reasons.

Much more sensible, in my opinion, would be to represent clitics as a minor slot (as a small letter –e.g. *c*) in the functional pattern. An argument in favour of this is the ambiguous linguistic status of clitics, as pointed out in some studies (cf. e.g. Fernández Soriano 1999: 1255f), in which they tend to be considered as morphemes rather than as full words. This view is favoured, among other things, by the fact that in non-finite verbal forms and in imperatives, clitics appear postverbally attached to the word as a kind of suffix (cf. sect. 3.2.) and they exhibit a very rigid order, much more characteristic of morphemes than of full words in Spanish (cf. Fernández Soriano 1999: 1256).

I will then assume that clitics are best represented in the functional pattern as a minor kind of slot (*c*) in the immediately

preverbal position. This can be represented as follows in the two functional patterns distinguished for Spanish:

- (24) a. P1 c V S O X  
 b. P1 S c V O X

These patterns will be able to account for the various constructions considered above which contain clitics –left dislocations (cf. (25a-b)), including those with an initial dative PP (25c), and constructions with an initial clitic with emotive or affective verbs (25d):

- (25) a. *Las normas, no las hemos hecho*  
 The norms, not them.ACCUS have.1PL made  
*para molestar* (HV: 71)  
 to disturb P1 c V X  
 ‘Norms haven’t been established in order to disturb.’
- b. *Este crecimiento de Madrid yo lo veo normal.* (=16) P1 S c V X
- c. *A la gente le gusta sentir.* (=23b) P1 c V S
- d. *Me gusta mucho la idea de ‘entrenamiento’.* (=3) c V X S

In cases where more than one clitic is used in an ordered sequence of indirect object clitic + direct object clitic (*Me lo dio* –‘To-me it he-gave’, *Se la prestó* –‘To her it he-lent’) immediately before the verb, I assume that both will be located in the c position in the template. This position can also house the highly productive particle *se* in Spanish, which occurs in the immediately preverbal position in passive and syntactically impersonal constructions, or with pronominal or reflexive verbs:

- (26) *En este libro se desvela, al fin, el misterio.* = (4d) P1 c V X S
- (27) *De hecho, de Dios y de la religión se habla de un modo*  
 In fact, about God and religion SE-IMP speaks of a way  
*muy opuesto.* (HV: 184)  
 very opposite P1 c V X  
 ‘In fact, about God and religion people talk in an opposite way.’

#### 4.2.2. The VXS construction

With the specification for the use of the P1 position given in section 4.1.1 above, it appears that verb-initial clauses can be easily captured by the first functional pattern for Spanish described in (7). Notice, however, that the VXS order found in constructions with extraposed subjects (as in (5a-b) = (19)) does pose a problem as it cannot be formally captured by any of the two patterns proposed.

This clause type is best analysed as a VXS construction in which X is a non-object argument of the verb, in this case a complement. However, in the functional pattern proposed for Spanish VS constructions, X constituents cannot be placed between the verb and subject. Now briefly, we can think of a number of possibilities to account for these VXS patterns in Spanish.

One option might be to posit a third functional pattern which can accommodate these constructions, even one that could be regarded as a minor pattern, in the following terms:

(28) P1 c V O X S

The second option involves postulating a single comprehensive pattern which can accommodate all types of order in Spanish, with different slots for the subject:

(29) P1 (S) c V (S) O X (S)

Finally, a third option implies the recognition for Spanish of a final P0 position, associated with elements with a Focus function. The VXS construction would then be captured by a revised version of pattern (7):

(30) P1 c V S O X P0

More generally, this proposal assumes retaining the two patterns in (7) and (13) and adding a special P0 ‘strategic position’ (cf. Hannay 1990) to both patterns in the last position of the clause proper. The postverbal subject in the VXS constructions discussed would be placed in P0 by virtue of its focal status and special syntactic position. Let me postpone this discussion of the P0 special position for Spanish to section 4.3.1, where this issue is taken up again.

This third option arises as a better option than the other two if we consider the role of functional patterns in the grammar and how they are to be understood. Looking at these from the perspective of Hannay's (1991) modes of message management, the functional patterns can be regarded as a reflection of pragmatic frames showing the speaker's communicative intention which is then codified into a particular linguistic expression.

Briefly, Spanish constituent order seems to be mainly governed by two of these modes of message management. One of these is the *topic mode*, involving the assignment of the pragmatic functions of Topic to an element in P1 and Focus to the new focal information presented later in the clause. The second is the *presentative mode*, where the speaker selects a new entity to appear later in the clause (as a New topic or Focus), which may be introduced by a scene-setting element placed in P1 but with no Topic assignment (cf. Hannay & Martínez Caro 2005).<sup>10</sup> This view of Spanish constituent order would then favour the consideration of two, rather than one or three, functional patterns (in the way of two main pragmatic frames) governing the different clausal patterns in Spanish. I then opt for (30), rather than (28) or (29).

### **4.3. Special positions other than P1**

#### *4.3.1. P0 in Spanish*

In FG and other models of grammar, “there seems to have been less discussion of what happens at and after the ends of clauses” than what occurs at the initial position (Butler 2003:179). And yet, the end of the clause has been often regarded as the unmarked position for focal or newsworthy information and the preferred location for long, heavy constituents such as embedded clauses (cf. e.g. (5a)). As we saw in section 4.1., one of the typical characteristics of the linearisation in variable word order languages is the existence of other special positions than P1 (Siewierska 1991: 223). Thus, in FG it has been claimed that there is a special pragmatically-relevant final

position within the clause in certain Slavic languages, such as Polish, Bulgarian and Czech (cf. Dik 1997: 426 and references therein).<sup>11</sup>

In view of the above and given the type of data presented in this paper, it might be worth seriously considering a P0 final position for Spanish. As we saw in the previous section, this appeared to be the best option when analysing VXS constructions in Spanish. This P0 position would house constituents with Focus function, both New (/New Topic) and Contrastive. These include the postverbal subjects in VS or clitic-VS constructions with presentative or other unaccusative verbs considered above, and reproduced here as (31), and also other instances of pragmatically-motivated postverbal subjects (where the subject is either assigned New Focus/New Topic or Contrastive Focus function), as in (32):

- (31) a. Me gusta mucho la idea de ‘entrenamiento’. = (3) c V X P0  
b. Existen tres mil especialidades matemáticas. = (4a) V P0  
c. en lugar de las esperadas bacterias proliferaron los hongos.  
= (11) P1 V P0
- (32) a. Lo mismo pienso yo. = (1a) P1 V P0  
b. No ha cambiado la expresión, ha cambiado  
el sesgo afectivo que dirige la interpretación. = (20) V P0 (both)

This P0 position can be represented in the functional patterns in the following way:

- (36) P1 c V S O X P0  
P1 S c V O X P0

A detailed account of this Focus P0 position in Spanish would require another whole study in its own, one which would clearly exceed the limits of the present paper. Among the issues worth pursuing in this respect are the exact subtypes of Focus associated with it, the conditions on which other syntactic constituents, in addition to the subject, can be placed in this position and whether or not this additional special position P0 would indeed be needed for the P1SV... pattern. Consequently, the proposal for a P0 position made here for Spanish should be considered tentative and needs further research. An attempt at looking at the role of this P0 position in

Spanish and at clause-final position in this language in general is Hannay & Martínez Caro (2005), where Spanish clause-final phenomena are compared to English.

#### 4.3.2. P2 and P3

In addition to P1, FG posits two other special positions, to the immediate left and the immediate right of the predication, called P2 and P3, respectively. In Spanish, examples with constituents in both of these positions are widely attested. Typical cases of elements in P2 are illocutionary or attitudinal satellites (as the initial phrases, separated by a comma, in 34a-b) or the ‘hanging topics’ we saw in (10a-b). P3 elements include phrases given as clarifications of some pronominal referent in the clause proper, as the final constituent after the comma in (35):

(34) a. De hecho, de Dios y de la religión se habla de un modo muy opuesto.  
= (27)

b. *Hasta cierto punto, es menos peligroso el escepticismo*  
To a certain point, is less dangerous the scepticism  
*que el dogmatismo.* (HV: 104)  
than the dogmatism  
‘To a certain point, scepticism is less dangerous than dogmatism.’

(35) *De eso... nos quejamos más las mujeres,*  
About that PRON complain.1PL more the women  
*de que los hombres no nos entienden.* (HV: 120)  
about that the men not to-us understand.3PL  
‘About that... women complain the most, that men do not understand us.’

This renders the following extended functional patterns for Spanish:

(36) a. P2, P1 c V S O X P0, P3  
b. P2, P1 S c V O X P0, P3<sup>12</sup>

## 5. CONCLUSION

The analysis outlined above does not pretend to do justice to the full range of factors underlying constituent order in Spanish. It has attempted to provide an illustration of how to approach the issue of constituent order in Spanish declarative main clauses from an FG perspective, as described in Dik (1997). The following main assumptions have been made:

- (a) Two main functional patterns have been proposed for Spanish declarative main clauses (disregarding the non-P1 special positions):

P1 c V S O X  
P1 S c V O X

- (b) Clitics are placed in a minor special position that we have represented as c in the functional pattern, in the immediately preverbal position.
- (c) There is a functionally-motivated P1 position in Spanish for constituents with special pragmatic purposes (with Topic, Contrastive Focus or, less typically, New Focus function), which may be filled by a single constituent or may be left empty (in the case of verb-initial clauses).
- (d) Following Zubizarreta (1999), two types of the traditionally considered left dislocation construction are recognised, with clear syntactic and discourse differences. In the first type, highly grammaticalised in Spanish, the left-dislocated element is aligned with other types of fronted arguments in Spanish and placed in P1; in the second, the ‘hanging topic’ construction, the element to the left of the clause is placed in P2.
- (e) A final P0 position is proposed for Spanish, mainly for postverbal subjects with Focus function (both New Focus/New Topic and Contrastive Focus).

## NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Contreras (1991), Torrego (1984) and Suñer (1982), within a formal paradigm and Silva Corvalán (1984), Ocampo (1990), and Bentivoglio & Weber (1986), as exponents of more functionally-oriented studies.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Delbecque (1991), Gutiérrez (1985) and Suñer (1982).

<sup>4</sup> Examples have been extracted from the book *Hablemos de la vida* (*Let's talk about life*, marked as HV) based on a series of formal conversations between a Spanish journalist (Nativel Preciado) and a philosopher (José Antonio Marina). In the examples, previous context is given, when necessary, delimited by square brackets. In a few cases, examples are extracted from the corpus *El habla de la ciudad de Madrid* (*The Speech of the City of Madrid*), edited by Esgueva and Cantarero (1981) and marked as CCM. This is particularly the case with examples which are mostly associated with the informal spoken language, such as left dislocations (cf. Downing 1997).

<sup>5</sup> Dik (1997) subdivides the function of Focus into New Focus and Contrastive Focus. Within the latter, two further subtypes are distinguished: Parallel Focus and Counter-presuppositional Focus. Topic is subdivided into New Topic, Given Topic, Sub-Topic and Resumed Topic (cf. Dik 1997: ch. 13).

<sup>6</sup> De Miguel (1992), Hatcher (1956) and Mendikoetxea (1999) are good comprehensive studies on presentative and unaccusative predicates in Spanish. I assume here a wide class of unaccusative predicates which includes presentatives, experiencer predicates and those occurring in *se*-passive constructions (cf. Martínez Caro 1999: 216-217 and Siewierska 1991:168).

<sup>7</sup> In this pattern, *c* stands for clitic: see section 4.2.1.

<sup>8</sup> Examples in Spanish such as (21) are superficially similar to the cleft construction in languages like English and French, except for the use of the initial copula (*it* in English and *ce* in French). Following Moreno Cabrera (1987), I take the view that the pseudo-cleft construction exists in Spanish, but not the cleft (cf. Martínez Caro 1999: 131-132). Examples like (21) only differ from the 'canonical' pseudo-cleft (*Quien definió al ser humano como animal que puede prometer fue Nietzsche*) in the constituent order. Agreement between verb and subject is the criterion followed for analysing the immediately postverbal phrase (in this case the NP *Nietzsche*), rather than the *Q*-clause, as subject (as is obvious in the example *Lo que hay que evitar son los excesos*, previously discussed as (9d)).

<sup>9</sup> This position also fits in better with the original idea of the clause structure in Spanish proposed in (6) above.



<sup>10</sup> I assume here that the reaction mode illustrated by the ‘focalisation’ construction as in (2) above, occurs rather marginally in Spanish.

<sup>11</sup> Similarly, de Schutter (1985) posits a final P0 position for Dutch, a relatively more fixed word order language.

<sup>12</sup> In the current discussion of FDG (Functional Discourse Grammar), the pragmatic functions corresponding to P2 and P3, Theme and Tail, are not relevant functions as the discourse act, rather than the clause, is taken as the basic unit of analysis. Themes and Tails are thus seen as different discourse acts.

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