

# PROBLEMS OF APPLYING THEMATIC ANALYSIS TO TRANSLATION BETWEEN SPANISH AND ENGLISH

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## 0. Introduction

TOURY'S INFLUENTIAL *DESCRIPTIVE TRANSLATION STUDIES* proposes a three-phase methodology for systematic studies of translation, incorporating a description of the product and the wider role of the socio-cultural system. This methodology (Toury 1995: 36-9) is:

- (1) situate the text within the target culture system;
- (2) compare the ST and the TT for shifts, identifying relationships between 'coupled pairs' of ST and TT segments, and attempting generalizations about the underlying concept of translation; and
- (3) draw implications for decision-making in future translating.

The important consideration of the text within its culture echoes the Hallidayan notion of Context of Culture, yet Toury in many ways fails to link this systematically to the second step of his meth-

odology, since the decision of what exactly to look at and what the relationships are between the generally small ST and TT segments is done on a mainly ad-hoc basis (for example, in one case it is metaphors, in another the translation of pairs of near synonyms). One of the aims of my work has been to suggest a more objective apparatus for such descriptive studies by using a systemic-functional grammar approach to compare the realization of the metafunctions in the ST and TT, allied to tools from corpus linguistics, which would enable accurate and rapid analysis of many surface features. In this way, shifts at the level of the metafunctions should be identifiable and hypotheses formed as to why these have occurred. Because of the systematic link in systemic functional linguistics between lexicogrammar, discourse semantics and genre, the shifts can also be related to the Context of Culture of the ST and TT and the different Contexts of Situations in which both the author and translator work.

The present paper will concentrate primarily on one area, the realization of the thematic element of the textual function in Spanish and English. The illustrative text will be a whole short story, *El verano feliz de la señora Forbes*, one of a collection by the Colombian Nobel Prize winner Gabriel García Márquez (1992), and its English translation, *Miss Forbes' Summer of Happiness*, translated by Edith Grossman (García Márquez 1993a).<sup>1</sup> It is the story, told by a child narrator, of an unhappy but dramatic summer he and his brother spent in the care of a daunting governess, Miss Forbes.

## 1. Thematic structure

In the Hallidayan/SFL approach, theme is *always* the first element in the clause; it continues up to and including the first ideational element (i.e. the first element that is a participant, process or circumstance), which is the *topical theme* (Halliday 1994: 52). There

are two other kinds of possible thematic constituents which may precede the topical theme: these are *textual theme* (a conjunction or conjunctive adjunct), and *interpersonal theme* (a modal adjunct). Rheme is then the remainder of the clause. Typically, in English the theme will coincide with the grammatical subject of a clause, as in the following example:

<b>Oreste</b>	<b>appeared behind the agave plants</b> (SP: 142)
theme	rheme.

*Oreste* is both the grammatical subject and the theme. In this typical, unstressed, pattern, *Oreste* is what would be referred to by Halliday (p. 43) as *unmarked theme*. If an element other than the grammatical subject is placed in theme position, it is classed as *marked theme* (p. 44) and is a result of a meaningful choice on the part of the writer. Halliday (p. 44) gives the most frequent marked themes as being an adverbial group or a prepositional phrase.

Although there are three kinds of theme (textual, interpersonal and topical), Eggins (1994: 284) emphasizes that it is really the choice of position of the topical elements which is considered to be 'the most significant choice in terms of the clause's thematic potential' and in ensuring the internal cohesion of the text. She gives (pp. 300-3) four important areas to examine when analysing theme:

- what elements get to be theme (textual, interpersonal, topical)
- the choice of topical theme (pronouns, nominal groups, adjuncts, etc.)
- the markedness of theme choices
- the thematic progression of the text.

These areas will form the basis of the analysis below.

### 1.1 Thematic structure of Spanish and English compared

The inherent problem, of course, is that thematic structure seems

to be realized somewhat differently in different languages, as emphasized by Nord (1991a: 107) and Mauranen (1993: 95). Baker (1992: 152) warns of the dangers of concentrating on the analysis of textual structures in English and extrapolating from this to other languages.

Early contrastive studies of Spanish and English (Contreras 1976, Vázquez-Ayora 1977) use a static generative-transformational model; later studies of Spanish (Silva-Corvalán 1983, Hickey 1990) focus on topicalization using a more Functional Sentence Perspective approach<sup>2</sup>, or on the pragmatic role of textual function (Alcaraz 1996); Nord's (1991) book and a range of papers on the subject (e.g. Enkvist 1978, Gerzymisch-Arbogast 1986, Prozorova 1992, Mauranen 1993) follow FSP in their analysis of word order and information focus in English, Spanish, German, Russian and Finnish; Baker (1992) and Hatim and Mason (1990, 1997) take into account both FSP and the systemic-functional model, while Taylor (1990, 1993) applies the systemic-functional model to the analysis of Italian, and Gómez (1995) does the same with Spanish.

Although it may seem that these studies set out from different positions, they inevitably consider very similar phenomena (especially a comparison of the elements which are fronted in the ST and in the TT and their progression through the texts) and they very often concur in their findings. For instance, Nord (1991: 213-4), analysing the English and German translations of a passage from Unamuno's *Niebla*, finds that, in both cases, the complicated rheme structure of the original is simplified and, in the German translation, their order (and thus the order of presentation of detail) is rearranged.

Baker (1992) makes observations about the importance for the translator of being aware of thematic and information structures, a relevant point since many translators, including Edith Grossman, have little formal linguistic training. She points out (p. 129) that understanding these structures and recognizing what is a marked or unmarked structure 'can help to heighten our awareness of meaningful choices made by speakers and writers in the course of com-

munication' and, therefore, help decide whether it is appropriate to translate using a marked form. Two problems in copying the ST pattern into the TT are given by Vázquez-Ayora (1977: 217), who emphasizes that calquing a rigid English word order when translating into Spanish would produce a monotonous translation, and by Gerzymisch-Arbogast (1986: 178), who considers the German calquing of English cleft sentences to be clumsy. This illustrates the dilemma, pointed out by Enkvist (1978), of balancing concern for information dynamics with the sometimes incompatible concern for other areas such as basic syntactic patterns.

Since English is a language which can be analysed easily by the systemic-functional approach, it would seem wise, in the present study, to adopt that model for the analysis of the TT. The crucial question is how far the same model can be used to compare each structure with the Spanish ST, with its more flexible syntax that can be manipulated for stylistic and pragmatic purposes (Hickey 1990, 1997). The major areas of difference between English and Spanish are: (1) subject pronoun omission, (2) the not infrequent VS order in Spanish, and (3) the different frequency of placement of adjuncts.

Of these, subject pronoun omission causes the most difficulty when attempting a comparative SFL thematic analysis. Pronouns in English form a large percentage of the topical themes of a narrative and are vital in cementing patterns of cohesion throughout any text. However, in Spanish subject pronouns are normally elided, the meaning being carried by the verb inflection. This inevitably creates different thematic patterns in the two languages, as is noted by Silva-Corvalán (1983: 117) and Baker (1992: 127-9). For example, the structure 'sentí un terror tan intenso' (DC: 189) would be analysed as:

sentí  
topical theme

un terror tan intenso  
rheme

whereas the English translation (SP: 141) would be:

I	felt a terror so intense
topical theme	rheme.

If a rigid systemic-functional model is followed, such language differences will *inevitably* create different thematic progression profiles for the two texts. The Spanish will inevitably throw up a larger number of verbs as topical themes. But it is important to remember that verb-initial clauses in Spanish and pronoun-initial clauses in English are both unmarked. In other words, these are normal systemic differences and the change of theme (verb-initial *sentí* to pronoun-initial *I*) cannot be said to represent a meaningful choice by the translator. In order to tackle this contrastive problem, the present study will consider that, in ST clauses of the type 'sentí un terror tan intenso', there has merely been ellipsis of the subject pronoun (in this case *yo*). The Spanish clause can then be compared in similar terms to the English clause as:

(yo)	<b>sentí un terror tan intenso</b>
topical theme	rheme

with no thematic shift in the translation. A similar consideration of ellipsis in English is used by Eggins (1994: 292) to determine theme in multiple clauses. An example from our own TT would be the sentence:

**Miss Forbes sliced a piece of moray and ordered us to continue.** (SP: 144),

analysed into two clauses as:

<b>Miss Forbes</b>	i	<b>sliced a piece of moray</b>
topical theme		i rheme

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and		[she]	i	ordered us to con-
tinue.				
textual theme		topical theme	i	rheme

where *she* is the elided topical theme of the second clause.

We shall attempt a thematic analysis of the Spanish ST from a systemic-functional perspective, and compare the thematic progression with the English TT. The pronoun differences will mean that adjustments will need to be carried out on the raw data in order to produce comparable results reflecting the relative markedness of the ST and TT.

## 2. Computer-assisted analysis of theme

This comparative analysis of ST and TT can be greatly facilitated by combining the use of computer-generated printouts of clause-initial elements with close critical checking and analysis of the text. A concordance of the clause-initial elements, and other statistics such as word frequency lists, can be easily generated by the now widely available *WordSmith* software (Scott 1996).

The main advantages of the computer are that it can almost instantaneously give access to *all* instances of a given phenomenon, something which would have been impossible in the past, and reorder the concordance lines according to the analyst's search criteria. This means that users of these tools 'will be forced to see what they might otherwise overlook' (Johansson 1995: 244). Nevertheless, Butler (1985: ix) points out the need for input from the analyst in order to make the most of the benefits of the computer:

It [the computer] is, however, only capable of a very few basic operations, so that considerable human ingenuity is needed to reduce complex problems to the machine's level of coding.

This will include the use of tagging procedures as explained below.

Basically, the procedure that has been followed here is to set up two corpora (one of the Spanish ST and one of the English TT) in electronic format, which can be quite a time-consuming process since it involves seeking copyright permission, then scanning in the text and carefully checking it for the inevitable scanning errors. In the present study, tags were then inserted in the corpora to mark sentence-initial and clause-initial elements. Sentence-initial elements in the Spanish texts were marked by < s> , clause-initial elements by < c> . In the English texts, these were < se> and < ce> respectively. The sentence-initial tags can be inserted automatically using Microsoft Word's 'Replace' facility. Thus, all full stops were replaced by '.' + '¿' + '< s>' or '< se>'. A little fine-tuning was nonetheless essential - the tag after the final full stop of the text must be deleted and an extra tag inserted before the very first sentence. An example of a resulting tagged sentence would be:

**< s> sentí un terror tan intenso**

Clause-initial tags are a more complex to add. Some may be inserted by searching for the strings '*que*' in Spanish and '*that*' and '*which*' in English, but they require subsequent manual checking, since, for example, some clauses will have omitted the comma or even, in the case of English, the relative pronoun. The advantage of the tagging procedure is that the search terms < s> and < c> can be used to find *all* the sentence- and clause-initial elements in the ST, and < se> and < ce> in the TT. All these can then be ordered according to the analyst's criteria, very often according to the first and second words right of the tag, so as to see the frequency of occurrence of different elements in those positions.



### 3. Methodology

The particular features that will be examined, therefore, following Eggins (see 1 above), are: what elements get to be theme, the choice of topical theme, the markedness of theme choices and the thematic progression of the text. Because of the inherent differences between spoken and written styles, which, if considered together, would blur the results, the decision was taken to concentrate on the main narrative for analytical purposes. The sections of dialogue were first removed manually.

The Spanish and English electronic texts were analysed separately. The concordancer was used to produce a concordance of all sentence-initial and clause-initial items in the ST and a similar concordance for the TT. Each concordance could then be ordered alphabetically (by means of the file menu) according to the first element in the clause and printed out. The two profiles were then be compared.

#### 4.1 'Raw' Results

Analysis in this section will first of all consider the 'raw' thematic profile of the ST and TT. It will then attempt to minimize the distortion of the systemic differences between the two languages by closely comparing the markedness of the thematic choices and the choice of topical theme.

In the Spanish original, there are 391 narrative clauses. The 'raw' results of 'what gets to be theme' in these narrative clauses are as follows:

Type of theme	instances
topical	391
textual	218
interpersonal	32

*Table 1* Types of theme in narrative clauses in ST

Although the number of clauses analyzed was 391, the sum total of different themes is higher (641) because some clauses contain a textual or interpersonal theme in addition to a topical one. It can be seen that there is a textual theme in just over half the cases. An example is the following, where the textual thematic element *Pero* precedes the topical theme *mi hermano*:

<b>Pero</b>		<b>mi hermano</b>		<b>rechazó el plato sin probarlo.</b> (DC: 192)
textual		topical		
theme				rheme
[Literally: But		my brother		rejected the dish without
trying it.] <sup>3</sup>				

Analysis of the TT narrative clauses produces the results displayed in Table 2 below:

Type of theme	instances
topical	404
textual	206
interpersonal	15

*Table 2* Types of theme in narrative clauses in TT

The number of clauses is a little higher in the English (404, compared to 391 in the Spanish). A few clauses are divided in the TT (see the ‘Por la tarde [...]’ sentence later in section 5 below) and there is also an increase in the number of subordinate and, especially, embedded clauses. An example is the following:

**Luego nos repitió, como tantas veces en tan poco tiempo, que [...]** (DC: 193)

[Then she repeated to us, as on so many occasions in so little time, that [...]]

In the TT, the relationship between *repitió* and *tantas veces* is made explicit by the addition of pronoun and verb:

**Then she repeated, as *she* had so often in so short a time, that [...]** (SP: 145).<sup>4</sup>

The most striking difference between Tables 1 and 2 is the far higher number of interpersonal themes in the Spanish (32, compared to 15 in the English). This is partly due to small attitudinal markers such as the emphatic *ya* and *también* (= *also*) occupying first position in Spanish, whereas they tend to be pushed further right in English. For example:

***Ya* era tarde.** (DC: 205)

**It was *too* late.** (SP: 156)

The other 14 examples of interpersonal themes in the Spanish are in fact negatives, the idea of forbidding and negation being an important one for the children in the story as they battle against the authoritarian regime of their governess. In some cases, given the systemic differences of the two languages, the translation is simply unable to preserve the thematic position of the negative - for instance, '*No oímos*' (DC: 202) becomes '*We didn't hear*' (SP: 153). This kind of inevitable thematic change will be taken into account in the adjustment of the raw figures below. However, there are other occasions where the translator does in fact have more leeway but she still normalizes the order in the English:

Era una lástima, de veras, porque *nunca* volvimos a encontrar unos pudines más deliciosos que los de la señora Forbes.

(DC: 191)

[It was a shame, really, because never returned we to find  
desserts more delicious than those of Miss Forbes.]

**It was a shame, really, because *we never* again tasted any  
desserts as delicious as those made by Miss Forbes.** (SP:  
143)

The ironic regret of the child, emphasized by the stress on *nunca*, could have been preserved with 'because never again were we to taste [...]'. However, that would have meant using a more marked, and perhaps rather dated, form in English for an everyday Spanish word order and would not have corresponded to the language of a child.<sup>2</sup>

Eggins (1994: 284) considers the choice and position of the topical themes to be 'the most significant choice in terms of the clause's thematic potential'. The breakdown of types of topical themes in the Spanish ST can be seen in Figure 1 below. The lower, lighter areas of each column show the number of topical themes in that category which co-occurred with a textual or interpersonal theme. Thus, of the 89 instances of a subject noun phrase in topical theme position, 43 were preceded by another theme. One example in this category is the 'Pero mi hermano rechazó el plato sin probarlo' sentence analysed above.

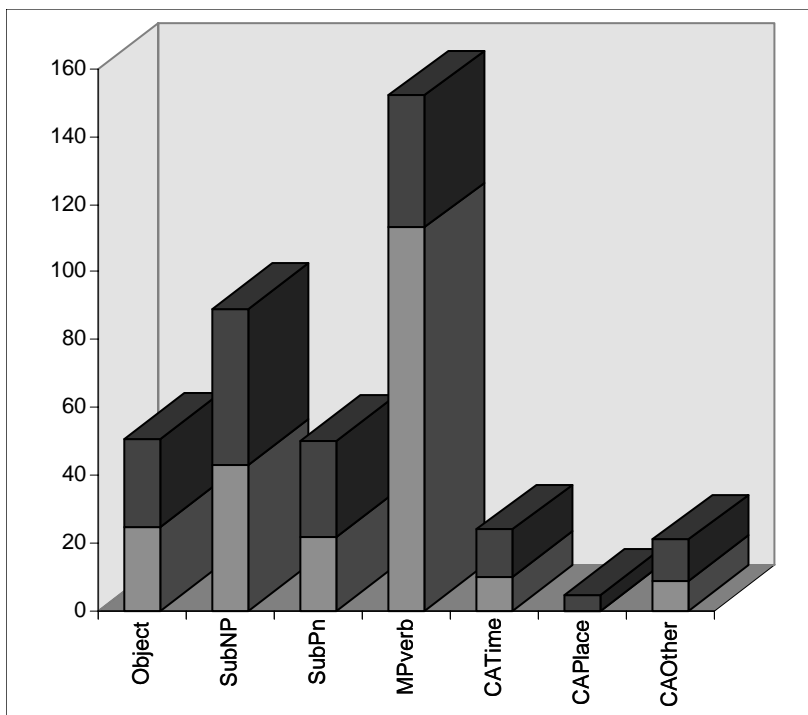
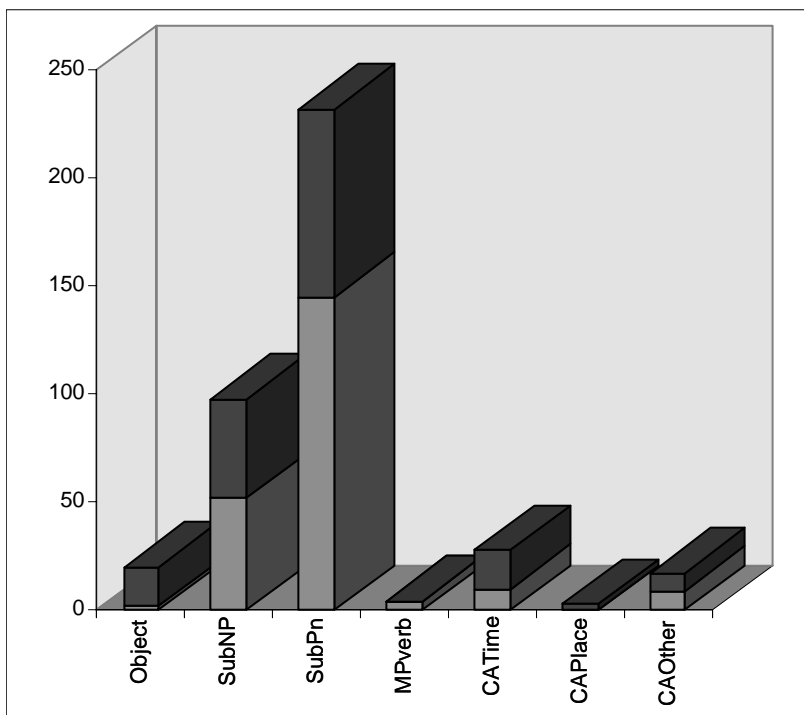


Figure 1 Topical themes in ST

(Key: *Object* = object noun/pronoun; *SubNP* = subject noun phrase; *SubPn* = subject pronoun; *MPverb* = main process verb; *CATime* = circumstantial adjunct of time; *CAPlace* = circumstantial adjunct of place; *CAOther* = other circumstantial adjunct).

The corresponding raw results for the TT are shown in Figure 2 below:



*Figure 2* Topical themes in TT

The most notable differences between the two profiles are that object pronouns and (especially) verb forms are more prominent in theme position in the Spanish ST, while subject pronouns are far more prominent in the English TT. These discrepancies are caused by systemic differences between the two languages. While these differences do affect the overall thematic profile of the two texts, they do not indicate that the ST is necessarily marked (i.e. that the prominences are at all out of the ordinary, though the absence of

similar profiles for other writers and genres makes markedness difficult to gauge), nor indeed that the TT should necessarily be able to or wish to replicate the ST patterning.

**4.2 Adjusted results**

In order to maximize the comparability of the thematic profiles, the procedure was adopted of analysing the ST making allowance for the elision of subject pronouns, as explained above (1.1). The adjusted results for the ST (Table 3) show a change in the number of interpersonal themes, once the negatives have been analysed out:

Type of theme	instances
topical	391
textual	218
interpersonal	22

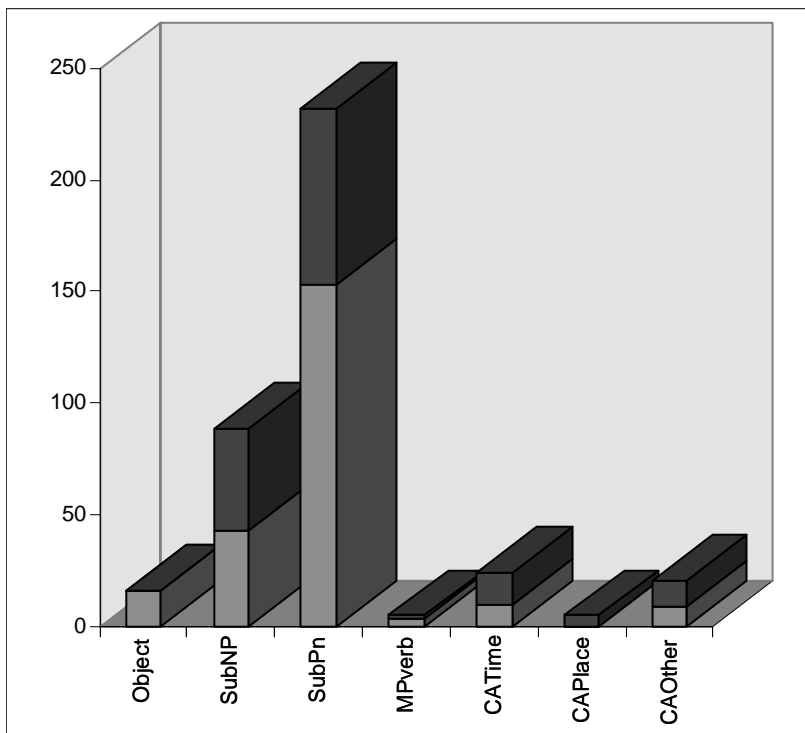
*Table 3* Adjusted figures for types of theme in narrative clauses in ST

The adjusted TT results remain the same as in Table 2 above, there being no extra elision or negatives to account for:

Type of theme	instances
topical	404
textual	206
interpersonal	15

*Table 4* Adjusted figures for types of theme in narrative clauses in TT

Figure 3 below displays the breakdown of topical themes in the ST, after adjustment for elisions:



*Figure 3* Adjusted results of topical themes in ST

The changes from the raw results (Figure 1 above) are that the number of object nouns/pronouns in theme position in the ST has reduced from 51 to 16 (these included embedded relative pronouns), subject pronouns in theme position have increased from 50 to 232 and the main process verb forms have gone from 152 down to just five. The resulting thematic profile in Figure 3 is now quite similar to the one we saw for the English TT in Figure 2. On the one hand,



this may be unsurprising since it could be argued that we have to some extent imposed an English-language framework on the ST. Yet the important point of comparison is the *relative markedness* of the two texts. Figure 3 removes some of the variables between the two language systems; its similarity to the profile in Figure 2 suggests that there has been no great shift in the markedness of thematic structure in Grossman's translation.

### 5. Close analysis of shifts in thematic patterns

However, as always, overall results can only hint at what is happening. It is close analysis of examples which reveals in more depth the shifts that have occurred. The verb-thematic elements remaining in the adjusted profile of the ST may be a starting point since they are in fact all examples of the VS order which Delbecque (1988: 186) had found in around 30% of the clauses in her corpus of philosophical Spanish. That there should only be six VS clauses out of the nearly 400 clauses in *El verano feliz de la señora Forbes* suggests that they are either not as frequent as previously thought or at least are not very frequent in the writing of García Márquez. But they are especially interesting to analyse since a calquing of their word order, which does not occur, would have given an unusual marked pattern in English. Three of the examples contain relational or existential processes, the following being typical:

**y entramos por la galería lateral, donde *estaban* dos hombres  
fumando sentados en el suelo junto a una camilla de campaña**  
(DC: 204)

[and entered through the side veranda, where were two men smoking  
seated on the floor next to a stretcher].

The translation solution adopted by Grossman involves word order normalization in the TL:

and [we] went to the side veranda, where two men *sat* on the floor next to a stretcher *and smoked* (SP: 155).

*Sat* takes the role of the existential process verb, replacing the past participle *sentados* and incorporating part of the relational process *estaban*. The lexical element *fumando* has been right-shifted and in fact constitutes a separate clause, *and smoked*. As far as the information structure is concerned, the TT highlights *smoked* as separate and new information at the end of the sentence, giving it a narrative prominence it does not have in the ST (this is the case no matter whether we adopt the Hallidayan approach or the Functional Sentence Perspective linearity principle of rising Communicative Dynamism). A translation keeping closer to the information structure of the ST might have been:

[and [we] went in through the side veranda, where *there were* two men *smoking, sitting* on the floor next to a stretcher].

The fact that this hypothetical translation was not chosen may be because the order of *smoking, sitting* does not intuitively fit a common TL pattern. On the other hand, another possibility, the order *sitting, smoking*, might have been a compromise that would have preserved much of the order of the ST (albeit with a reversal of some of the information structure) and been more 'acceptable' in the TL. However, the translator has preferred to conform entirely to the word order conventions of the TL. This is also the case in the other three VS instances, which all involve material processes, each presenting different types of problem for the translator:

***Se había precipitado una tormenta de verano mientras nadábamos*** (DC: 204)

[[There] *had rushed across* a summer storm while we were swimming]

***Entonces entraba Fulvia Flámínea, la cocinera, con la eterna sopa de fideos de aquel verano aborrecible.*** (DC: 192)

[Then *used to enter* Fulvia Flaminea, the cook, with the eternal vermicelli soup of that abominable summer.]

and:

***y en el curso de la lectura le pasaban por la cara las ráfagas de claridad que irradiaban las palabras escritas*** (DC: 201).

[and in the course of the reading *passed* over her face flashes of light that were irradiating the written words].

In each case, the translator produced a more conventional and predictable English word order in translation. Such a decision is perhaps understandable in the translation of the first example:

***A summer storm had broken while we were swimming***  
(SP: 154)

where a translation such as ‘There had suddenly brewed up/ arrived a summer storm’, sticking closer to the ST patterning, would be very unusual in English.

In the second example, the thematic position of the material process verb *entraba*, which serves to focus attention on the mo-

tion, is occupied in the TT by the Actor, *the cook*, while the adjunct introduced by *con* is explicated by the present participle *carrying*:

**Then the cook, Fulvia Flaminea, *came in*, carrying the eternal vermicelli soup of that abominable summer.** (SP: 144)

Yet the focus of the ST might have been preserved by a translation such as:

Then *in would come* Fulvia Flaminea, the cook, with the eternal vermicelli soup [...].

Though marked in English, this solution is in no way unusual. *Las ráfagas de claridad que irradiaban las palabras escritas* in the third example is a postposed 'long' subject (as described by Delbecque (1988) and Bolinger (1954/1991)), which also contains an embedded clause. This is again normalized in the TT. There is a reversal of point of view in the translation of the process described by *irradiaban*, the embedded clause is incorporated into the present participle *radiating* and the whole TT subject precedes the verb *passed over*:

**and while she read, flashes of light radiating from the written words passed over her face** (SP: 152).

A different construction was once again possible and might again have preserved much of the thematic structure of the ST:

and, as she read, *there passed over her face* flashes of light radiated by the written words

or even:

and, as she read, over her face *passed* flashes of light radiated by the written words.

Of course, the problem is precisely that, while these possible solutions preserve the process-oriented focus of the unmarked Spanish ST, they produce a marked order in English. Grossman prefers a normalizing translation to SV order in English.

The examples discussed above, where the translator has conformed at least in part with the thematic requirements of the TT, suggest that Grossman has not held to Venuti's (1995) recipe of 'foreignizing' the TT (see section 6 below). Had she done so, she might have risked the 'unusual' translation in the summer storm example, or one of the marked translations in the last two examples in order to make the ST texture visible in translation.

When the thematic progression or 'method of development' of the texts is examined, it is adjuncts which seem to get shifted most of all in the TT. This is seen dramatically in the very first sentence:

**Por la tarde, de regreso a casa, encontramos una enorme serpiente de mar clavada por el cuello en el marco de la puerta, y era negra y fosforescente y parecía un maleficio de gitanos, con los ojos todavía vivos y los dientes de serrucho en las mandíbulas despernancadas. (DC: 189)**

[In the afternoon, on returning to the house, we found an enormous sea serpent nailed by the neck to the door frame, and [it] was black and phosphorescent and seemed to be a gypsy curse, with its eyes still alive and serrated teeth in gaping jaws.]

which is one of the few Spanish sentences that is divided in the translation:

**When we came back to the house in the afternoon, we found an enormous sea serpent nailed by the neck to the door frame. Black and phosphorescent, it looked like a Gypsy curse with its still-flashing eyes and its sawlike teeth in gaping jaws. (SP: 141)**

The starting point of the Spanish story is the time element *Por la tarde*, any mention of the Actors being left until the inflection of *encontramos*. On the other hand, the English TT, while still starting the sentence with an indication of time (*When*), pushes the adjunct *in the afternoon* to the end of the clause and makes the Actor *we* the first topical element. The English even divides the long ST sentence into two. The paratactic structure of the ST ('y era negra y fosforescente [...]') is consistent with the simplistic viewpoint of the child. This contrasts with the TT, which has the heavily marked modifying theme *Black and phosphorescent* and a more complex and tightly-organized structure. The French translation, by Annie Morvan (García Márquez 1993b), opts for exactly the same division of the sentence, but, as with the previous example, it maintains the placing of the opening ST adjuncts:

**Un soir, en rentrant à la maison, nous trouvâmes un énorme serpent de mer cloué par le cou au chambranle de la porte. Noir et phosphorescent, il évoquait un maléfice de gitans avec ses yeux encore vivants et ses dents de scie dans ses mâchoires écarquillées. (p. 120)**

This suggests that key questions such as sentence division may be tackled similarly by different translators but that the placement of circumstantial adjuncts may vary according to the TL and the translator's view of the orientation of the narrative framework.

While the overall count for first-position space and time adjuncts does not differ greatly between ST and TT (see Figures 2 and 3 above), close analysis again reveals a (not always consistent) ten-

dency towards a shift in the thematic function of individual examples which cannot be explained by a difference in usage between the languages. One clear shift occurs in the following description. In the ST, the scene is viewed from the setting of the stone steps where the children stand watching the fisherman sail away:

***Desde la escalera de piedra le dijimos adiós con la mano, haciéndole creer que nos disponíamos a subir a la casa, hasta que desapareció en la vuelta de los acantilados.*** (DC: 203)

[From the stone steps we waved good-bye, making him think that we were getting ready to go up to the house, until [he] disappeared round the cliffs.]

The visual movement of the scene is underlined by opposing the *escalera de piedra* at the beginning with the *en la vuelta de los acantilados* at the end. This orientation of the ST disappears in the translation, and the message is organized around the Actors *we*:

**We waved good-bye *from the stone steps*, making him think we were about to climb up to the house, until he disappeared around the cliff.** (SP: 154)

However, on other occasions, adjuncts, particularly of time, are shunted left in the translation. The final example concludes a series of Spanish sentences oriented around time themes ('Dos días después... Eso fue un viernes... Pero la noche del martes... - [Two days later... That was a Friday... But on the Tuesday night...]) that depict the children hoping to kill off Miss Forbes and being disagreeably surprised by her successful arrival at Wednesday's breakfast:

Sin embargo, llegó tan puntual como siempre al desayuno *del miércoles*. (DC: 200)

[However, [she] arrived as punctual as ever to breakfast *on Wednesday*.]

Yet *on Wednesday* she came to breakfast with her customary punctuality. (SP: 151-2)

The ST thematizes the contrastive textual element *Sin embargo* and the topical element *llegó*; the TT also thematizes *Yet*, but follows this with *on Wednesday*. In fact, the TT makes the time focus of this sentence fit more coherently into the pattern of time themes of the sentences that preceded it. However, by doing this the contrast and surprise value of the Spanish is lost, the emphasis on Miss Forbes's appearance (*llegó*) is played down, and *her customary punctuality* is now rhematic, which seems to be a distortion of the original. A closer thematic mapping of the original would be:

Yet in she came as punctual as ever for breakfast *on Wednesday*.

Thematic shifts such as this last one affect the spatial and temporal points of view of the narrative (see Simpson 1993). This has to do with the left-to-right order of presentation on the page conforming to the order in which an event takes place or at least is perceived to take place. This order is important in García Márquez's work, since many scenes are described in an almost cinematic fashion, starting from a time or space adjunct, such as *Desde la escalera de piedra* in the example above. In a visual scene such as that one, the spatial point of view is affected. The ST presentation of the location of the children (*desde la escalera de piedra*), followed by the object pronoun (*le*) and process (*dijimos adiós con la mano*), and ending with the final view of Oreste's disappearance round the cliff, is compromised in the TT by the displacement of the space adjunct (*from the stone steps*). It does seem that such details of



point of view are rarely focused on or discussed by translators. Central stylistic structures can thus sometimes become altered in translation .

## **6. Conclusion**

This paper has sought to analyze systematically the thematic profile of a Spanish ST and an English TT. The computer-based approach is useful in enabling rapid analysis of a whole text. Nevertheless, some adjustment has had to be made to the SFL model (notably for subject pronouns) in order to be able to compare the relative markedness of the two texts. By doing this, it has been suggested that VS order often gets normalized in translation and that circumstantial adjuncts are prone to displacement, perhaps affecting the point of view of the narrative. On the other hand, supporters of the FSP model might argue that the difficulties of comparing Spanish and English call for a more flexible approach from translator and researcher, that the prominence and communicative dynamism of material process forms in the raw results of the Spanish text merely highlight that Spanish is a more 'event-based' language, and that the translator should seek ways of preserving this stress in the English translation. But how this could actually be achieved is problematic and would need further investigation. Immediate ideas that suggest themselves are for the translator to keep a verb or particle in first position (as in the 'Then *in would come* Fulvia Flaminea, the cook,' suggestion in section 5), to make more use of dynamic continuous tenses or to seek lexical verb equivalents to compensate for being unable to maintain word order.

Despite these uncertainties, this paper has set out one specific method of analysing the ST-TT pairs mentioned in Toury's approach (see introduction). The related step in Toury's model was to attempt generalizations about the underlying concept of translation.

Indeed, the solution to thematic structure analysis which translators (and researchers) adopt partly illustrates the 'norms' that are in operation within the translation process. For instance, Prozorova's view (1992: 128) is strongly ST-oriented ('one should try if possible to preserve the sentence structure of the original'), which would correspond to Venuti's (1995: 20) description of the 'foreignizing' translation, privileging the ST identity. The opposite pole, what, in Venuti's terms (p. 21), would be 'domesticating' translation, is occupied by Baker, who asserts that the text should necessarily 'read [...] naturally and smoothly' (1992: 172). Edith Grossman herself (personal communication) says she sets out to write in a way 'the author would write if he or she wrote in English', a very target language oriented approach. The thematic analysis in this paper would suggest that she does indeed generally 'normalize' variants from the Spanish ST. In complementary analysis, I have related these findings to the analysis of shifts in the other metafunctions and have identified pressures within the Context of Culture (such as publishers' instructions) that may be motivating these shifts. Analysis of further texts by other authors and translators using this model could now be valuable in seeing whether the results of this paper are applicable to the translation process in general and in drawing implications for future decision making, the third step in Toury's model.

### Notes

1. Examples used below that are taken from the Spanish source text will be coded 'DC', with the page reference. Those from the target text will be coded 'SP'.

2. In the FSP tradition of analysis, the essential concept is that of *communicative dynamism* (CD). This is a relative measurement: 'the degree of CD carried by a linguistic element is the relative extent to which this element contributes toward the further development of the communication' (Firbas 1986: 42). Although Firbas (p. 43) gives a general principle that communication tends to 'be perspectived' towards the end of the sentence, syntactic structure (called *linear modification*) is just one of the factors which determine the degree of CD. For Firbas, context is the most crucial: if a piece of information is 'new', or 'context-independent', it carries most CD. Unlike the Hallidayan approach, in FSP rheme is *always* new information, but it may occupy first position in the sentence. Despite the terminological differences between the SFL and FSP approaches, they do converge at many basic points. Firbas (1992: 69) describes theme in terms very similar to Halliday's, namely as 'the point of departure in the development of the communication', and, as Fries (1983: 136) pragmatically concludes, 'no matter whose definition of given is used, most themes do indeed express given information'. Importantly for the present study, Fries stresses (1992: 124) that it is the thematic progression through a text which determines whether the text holds together. Different genres will have different thematic profiles. A traditional narrative, for example, would very probably base its thematic progression around characters, sequence of time, point of time or place as themes.

3. Those translations given in brackets are close translations of the Spanish, for explanatory and illustrative purposes only.

4. The italicized elements in all examples are my additions, for ease of reference only.

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