

## ON PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS AND THEIR CORRELATION WITH SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS: A FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

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The aim of this paper is to analyse two different text types within a discourse functional framework, in order to determine whether there is a difference in their formal realizations of new and known topics. This will be done by investigating how introductory and given topics are realized in clause structure in a sample of sixty news items and tourist brochures. In line with Biber, I have assumed that linguistic features vary with communicative purpose and topic. The results of the analysis carried out seem to conflict with Dik's claim that the new topics tend to be located towards the final slot of the clause. The study also shows that these two text types differ in terms of how the known topics are realized syntactically.

Key words: Functional Grammar, text type, new topic, known topic, subject, initial position

### 1. Aims and scope of the article

Within the frameworks of the Prague School of Linguistics, Functional Grammar, American Functionalism and Cognitivism, many linguists have made reference to the tendency of the English language to locate clausal topics in initial position coinciding with the subject of the clause.<sup>1</sup> In the forties, Mathesius (1939) pointed out the close relationship between given topic, initial position and subject. Later on, within the framework of Functional Grammar, Dik (1989, 1997) stated that topic and subject, though distinct, have a strong tendency to coincide in the same term. From a cognitive perspective, van Oosten (1985) affirmed that the prototypical topic, defined as a perceptually salient entity through an extended stretch of text, tends to overlap with the grammatical function of subject and the semantic function of agent. Within American Functionalism, Givón (1992) also considered that the entities that express topical

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on a previous study on syntactic and pragmatic functions carried out in my doctoral thesis, *La Introducción y el Mantenimiento del Tópico en las Noticias de Sucesos y en los Folletos Turísticos*, which was directed by Prof. Angela Downing. I am indebted to her for her accessibility and interesting comments on that research. My sincere gratitude also to Cristina Alonso for her help in the elaboration of the current statistical backup.

information usually coincide with nominal groups which have a subject and object function. Following this position, Langacker (2000: 28-29) describes a prototypical subject as being both an agent and the primary clausal topic.

In order to narrow the scope of this research, in the following pages we will focus our attention on the interdependence between new and known topics and subject within the framework of Functional Grammar (Dik 1989, 1997; Hengeveld, 2004a,b). With regard to the correspondence between new topics and subject, there has been a wide-ranging debate during the last 20 years among functional linguists. While in Dik's account new topics tend to occupy a late non-subject rather than an early clausal position (even in those languages in which the subject is prototypically initial), Givón (1989: 224), on the basis of the task urgency principle, estimates that new topics preferably surface in the earlier syntactic positions of the clause.<sup>2</sup>

As to the relationship between given topics and subject, Dik (1978, 1989, 1997) has defended the intuition in English for the topic to be preferentially assigned to the argument that fulfils this syntactic function. However, the prototypical subject-(given) topic correlation has also aroused controversy. In fact, within the Functional Grammar account the interdependence between subject and topic is not presented as exclusive or obligatory in the sense that a (given) topic may well be a non-subject constituent and a subject may well be a non-given topic. Within the framework of American Functionalism, Givón (1989) adopts a more radical stance since he characterizes the subject as the grammaticalized topic and the primarily pragmatic notion. The unmarked association that is established between (given) topic, subject and P<sub>1</sub> in the FG account is due to Dik's restriction of topic assignment to constituents with special formal treatment, which in English is mainly associated with the initial slot of the clause, where the subject is prototypically placed.<sup>3</sup> However, in Cornish's contribution to *A New Functional Discourse Grammar* (FDG) (2004), the assignment of topic status is regarded as being sensitive to both cognitive and contextual factors that go beyond the simple correlation of topic with clause-initial position, with subjecthood or with any morphological marking. Thus in his model the topic-initial position correlation is no

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<sup>2</sup> According to this principle, the clause-initial information will be either less predictable or more important than the information located in the final slot of the clause. This conflicts with the idea that given or topical information tends to come before new or focal information. The non-initial positioning of focal constituents may be understandable from a processing viewpoint: the cognitive identification of focal information, which is typically new, and the selection of the appropriate lexicalization for it, both require time. By contrast, topical information that is already activated and therefore highly accessible is immediately available for expression (Butler, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> The principle of constituent ordering SP<sub>5</sub> says as follows: "Since the subject is the prime GivenTopic candidate, it will often be placed in P<sub>1</sub>" (Dik, 1997: 409). Following Dik (1997: 255), initial position, nominative case (in pronouns) and agreement with the verb are the three basic characteristics of the subject function. Note also that in FG pragmatic functions are assigned only when a constituent is given some distinctive treatment in the language. FG is concerned exclusively with phenomena which have a clear grammatical, lexical or intonational reflex in the actual structure of utterances. For this reason, Mackenzie and Keizer (1991) argue that English doesn't have the topic function, since there is no grammatical reflection of topichood in this language.

longer a requirement for topichood.<sup>4</sup> In turn, this implies that the identification of topical entities with the syntactic function of subject or with P<sub>1</sub> is not as obvious as has been considered so far in Functional Grammar.

In the approach adopted here, Topic is actually required to account for textual phenomena that surpass the simple identification of this discourse category with specific marking or formal realizations. Taking this view as the starting point of our analysis, the aim of this paper is to explore the syntactic realizations of the pragmatic function of topic in two different written text types within a discourse functional framework (Hengeveld 2004a,b).<sup>5</sup> This will be done by investigating how the new and known topics of 30 news items and 30 tourist brochures are realized syntactically. We shall examine whether the clausal topics of the sample texts are prototypically realized by clause initial or subject constituents (Givón 1992, Dik 1989, 1997, Langacker 2000) or whether the communicative function and contextual characteristics of the two subgenres under investigation impose some different syntactic patterning.

First of all, in full consonance with Cornish (2004), the concept of topic is defined from the aboutness perspective as a discourse, cognitive and contextual notion, independent of language-specific coding devices. Secondly, following van Dijk (1981a and b) and Dik (1997), two basic levels of topicality are proposed: discourse topics and clausal topics. A further hierarchical organization of clausal topics is made and the concepts of introductory topic, given topic, subtopic and resumed topic are defined in an attempt to limit their scope and facilitate their identification in discourse. This is followed by a brief comment on the specific communicative purposes and contextual characteristics of the two subgenres analysed. Finally, after referring to the method of analysis, the syntactic realizations of new and known topics will be studied in the sample of journalist and travel texts. This will be done on the basis of the descriptive and syntactic approaches established by Quirk (1985) and Downing and Locke (2002).

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<sup>4</sup> There is a universal claim that all languages have a special clause initial position P<sub>1</sub> which is used for special purposes. These include both the placement of constituents which must necessarily be put in P<sub>1</sub> and the placement of constituents with special pragmatic significance (Hannay 1991, Dik 1997: 420). In this paper, I have assumed that P<sub>1</sub> (Dik 1997) contains one and only one intraclausal constituent which fulfills a function in transitivity (Halliday 1985, 1994, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> As Hengeveld (1997, 2004a and b) affirms there are some grammatical phenomena that can only be properly described with reference to units larger than the utterance. These phenomena create the need for developing Functional Grammar into a discourse grammar. While the new Functional Discourse Grammar is being written, some reflections as to what a grammar of discourse implies have been presented in Mackenzie and Gómez-González's (2004) *A New Architecture for Functional Grammar* and Mackenzie and Gómez-González's (2005) *Studies in Functional Grammar*.

## 2. Towards a definition of topic. Discourse topics and clausal topics

Following the view of topic as a discourse, cognitive and contextual notion, topic is defined from the aboutness perspective as the entity, proposition or main idea which a clause, a stretch of discourse or a discourse in its global sense is about. Thus, in the delimitation of the notion of topic as aboutness, the following key aspects are all taken into account: the communicative purpose of the speaker/writer, defined on the basis of relevance or current interest (Reinhart, 1982); the short-term linguistic contextual information derivable from both the previous and the subsequent discourse; the extralinguistic context of communication and, finally, the long-term or general knowledge that the interlocutors share or can infer from a specific situation (Moya, 2005, 2006). Interpreting a text or stretch of discourse from a topical perspective is highly dependent on being able to activate the knowledge structures or schematic conceptions (Lakoff 1990) which have shaped our experience of the world. As a result, I have considered this concept as a pragmatic discourse phenomenon, which can only be established in contextual terms and on the interactants' communicative purpose and the speaker/writer's evaluation of the addressee's current cognitive state. In the approach adopted in this paper, the assignment of topic is no longer, as is the case in orthodox FG, dependent mainly on language-specific regulations. It is, however, the result of non-grammatical contextual and cognitive operations, and the competing demands imposed by the interpersonal, representational and structural components of the language (Hengeveld, 2004a,b, 2005).

The notion of topic has been enlarged upon to apply not only to the clause, but also to textual sections and to the text in its global sense. In fact, depending on the unit of application, from the text right down to the clause, many linguists make a distinction between discourse or global topics and clausal or local topics (van Dijk, 1977, 1981a; Reinhart, 1982; Downing 1991; Dik, 1997; Alcaraz 2000). In line with Cornish's views, in this paper the local topic is defined as a contextual, salient and referential entity about which information is given at the clause level. The local topic is a constituent that is at the forefront of the interlocutor's consciousness at the time of speech and which, after its first activation, is maintained through the continuous references that are made to it throughout the text (Givón 1983, 1995). However, in many cases the topic expresses a main idea or a general concept that unifies and gives coherence to the text. While the clausal topic represents the entity or the proposition about which information is given at local level, the discourse topic represents what a whole text or discourse is about and is defined as a cognitive schema which sequentially organizes and unifies all the clausal topics of the discourse under the same topical frame (van Dijk, 1977, 1981a and b; van Oosten, 1985).

Although in cognitive approaches the general meaning of a text is not always considered to be intrinsically present, but is instead assigned to it by its readers, I have considered the notion of Discourse Topic useful to refer to the global idea which the discourse is about. Therefore, discourse topics were identified a) in terms of the global idea expressed either in news headlines or in the titles and subtitles of tourist brochures and b) on the basis of the aboutness perspective referred to previously. On many occasions these provide a framework for the global meaning of a stretch of text, giving the analyst a basis for focussing on the textual elements that carry out in some way the

general thrust of a passage. Clausal or local topics were identified by their being embodied or subsumed within the discourse topic and by their referential continuity in the text. In practical terms, the clausal topics of the news items and tourist brochures under analysis are prototypically those referential, identifiable and perceptually salient entities (Chafe, 1994) which, after their activation in the current discourse, (1) convey the pragmatic aboutness of the clause in relation to the wider discourse (Reinhart, 1982), (2) are at the forefront of the interlocutor's consciousness at the time of utterance, (3) are referred to in the following cataphoric discourse by means of proforms, repetitions, synonyms, etc. and (4) emerge linguistically as the nominal arguments of clauses.

### **3. A classification of clausal topics: from new to given, sub and resumed topics**

With regard to the hierarchization of clausal topics and in line with Dik (1989, 1997), a further typology of four different subtypes of clausal topics is differentiated (new topic, given topic, subtopic and resumed topic), in order to study the cohesive relationships that are established between the local topics of a text and the sequentiality with which they are activated in discourse. Topical referents may stay alive throughout several clauses or even the whole text, or have a low level of persistence. After a new topic is activated for the first time, it can be maintained by means of given topics, subtopics and resumed topics (Dik, 1989, 1997).

Independently of their positions in the clause, New topics are those topical entities that are introduced for the first time in the discourse. The function of introductory topics is to activate an entity which will later become a potential topic in the subsequent text (Hannay, 1985a). Therefore, two characteristics should be attributed to this notion: on the one hand, its presentational and new character and, on the other, its high level of persistence in the following context. The new topic is the most problematic of the four subtypes of FG topics, since it is treated as a type of Focus. Even Dik (1989, 1997) admits that there is not a clear-cut boundary between the notions of new topic and focus. The focal nature of Dik's new topic is also recognized by Hannay (1985a), who proposes a focal presentative function equivalent to Dik's new topic. Mackenzie and Keizer (1991) also consider newtops as presentative focus elements. These controversial aspects have led me to assume that, although all clauses can, in principle, contain one referential entity which can be assigned a topical status, this does not mean that all referential entities fulfil a topical function. In the topical approach adopted here, only those entities that are preserved at least once after their first introduction in the text have been considered topical.

Once a topical element has been introduced or activated it becomes a "given topic". A topical entity should be analysed as known not only in those cases when it has been previously activated directly or indirectly through an introductory topic or a subtopic component (Dik, 1989), but also when it is available from the general or situational contexts that the interlocutors share (Mackenzie and Keizer, 1991), or when it is presented by other informative elements of the clause. These can be either verbal processes, circumstances or nominal entities which, usually placed in final position, introduce future potential topics (Moya and Albentosa, 2001; Moya, forthcoming).

The term subtopic is used here to define those entities associated with a new topic (Fumero Pérez 2001) or related to a topic previously activated in the text: “If an entity X has been activated in the given setting, then the speaker may present an entity Y as a sub-Topic entity, if  $Y R X$ , where R is a relationship of inference” (Hannay, 1985b: 53). In the sample of texts under analysis a subtopic relationship implies a part-whole relationship within the basic topic. In line with Prince (1981) and Hannay (1985a), I have considered that subtopics should be described on the basis of their dual nature both as new entities, due to their innovative character, and as given entities, since they are contextually bound and can be inferred, albeit indirectly, from other previously evoked entities. It is for this reason that, although they are not identical to other constituents that have already been activated in the linguistic context, their capacity for inference and their contextual dependence have led me to consider them as known elements that fulfil a function in topic continuity.

Finally, I use the term resumed topic to describe any topical entity that is re-established via anaphoric reference after some absence in the discourse, without necessarily being an explicit indication of resumption. A resumed topic is a referent assumed to exist within the current discourse, but is not the current focus of attention of the addressee (Cornish, 2004). For the purposes of this paper, the resumed topic has been considered as a mechanism of continuity since it keeps a known topical entity that had already been the focus of attention alive.

As it is not possible to introduce all the information at once and in a sole constituent, there are continuity and discontinuity chains within a stretch of text. The discourse is in this way organized hierarchically in topical sequences, formed by groups of clauses that are about the same topic and that keep, in turn, a narrow relationship with the discourse topic. A topic will be maintained while it is still relevant to the communicative purpose and until the activation of a new informative entity opens a different topical chain. While the writer has to add more information about a topic, this will be kept alive by means of the continuous references that are made to it. Once the chain is over, the current topic is left behind and a new referent with a topical status is introduced.

#### **4. Analysis of the data and exemplification**

Now that the theoretical framework has been outlined, the proposed concept of topic can be applied to the sixty news items and tourist brochures in order to establish whether there are differences in their topical and syntactic organizations. As the main aim of this study is to carry out a comparative analysis of the syntactic realizations of the notion of topic displayed by the two subgenres researched, the communicative purpose and contextual characteristics of the sample of texts which form the data are outlined in section 4.1.

#### 4.1. Database and text type selection

As previously stated in the introduction of this paper, our aim is to compare the syntactic realizations of clausal topics in thirty news items and thirty tourist brochures, taken from a selection of English quality newspapers and tourist brochures. While the main aim of the journalist is to inform the greatest number of readers about all issues of a current event in a hypothetically objective and impersonal way, the main goal of the brochure (although it is, to a certain extent, also informative in nature) is to promote tourism in the areas being described. In line with Biber (1995), who considers that linguistic features vary with communicative purpose, situational context and topic, it is anticipated that the difference in rhetorical purpose of the two text types under analysis will determine the position of clausal topics within the structure of the clause and consequently produce differences in their formal realizations.

The thirty news items selected for research belong to the informative subgenre and, following van Dijk (1988a), can be classified as 'hard news', as they are current events that should be published the same day on which they occur. The selected news items are sensationalist in character and make reference to events of human interest, which usually imply rarity, suspense, conflict, antagonism and violence. Their style is impersonal and concise. Thus, they can be considered, together with brief news, as the prototype of pure news par excellence. Although the rhetorical purpose of the journalist can be influenced by political, social or ideological motives (Fowler, 1991), his/her main aim is to transmit hypothetically objective and truthful information<sup>6</sup> (van Dijk, 1988b; Grijelmo, 1997). The transmission of this type of information imposes a narrative style characterized, as Downing points out, 'by temporal sequencing of events, dynamic verbs, usually past tense and characters that perform actions' (1998: 25). The sample of texts have been chosen at random from three quality newspapers (*The Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*), all typically directed at the liberal, educated middle class with a medium or high level of culture (Jucker, 1992). Finally, the mode of the news is, evidently, the written language. The written product tends to be independent of the immediate context in which the event that is narrated takes place. Therefore, there is no possibility of feedback between the news writer and his/her reader. The lexis is elaborate, presenting a high level of lexical density, and the syntax is normally characterized by its low grammatical intricacy. These various aspects of the news items determine the utilization of a formal, concise and impersonal language that does not use personal comments and evaluative expressions.

In contrast to the informative and narrative character of the news items, the main aim of the tourist brochures is not so much to inform the reader about a particular 'product' as to influence directly his behaviour (van Dijk, 1988a and b); Cook, 1992). The promotion of a geographical area, a city, a museum, etc. is the main aim of the tourist brochures. With the help of iconic elements, psychological and social mechanisms and convincing and descriptive techniques, the professional tries to

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<sup>6</sup> Although many Spanish scholars agree that journalism must be essentially objective (Martín Vivaldi, 1993; López García, 1996), news items are products which are logically mediated by ideological interests. In fact, with the term 'objectivity', Martínez Albertos (1993: 43) makes reference to the journalist's duty to truthfulness and intellectual honesty.

persuade the reader to accept fully the information that is shown in the brochure. Regarding the interpersonal relationship that is established between the travel writer and the reader of a tourist brochure, a travel writer aims to persuade a possible visitor, usually someone less familiar with the place that is being described. Although there is no possibility of feedback between them, the writer of the tourist brochure appeals to the potential tourist in a personalized tone in order to influence his/her behaviour.

As written texts, the tourist brochures share some properties of the mode of the news items; both subgenres are written to be published. However, in contrast to the discourse of journalism, the language of the travel writer is more interpretative, persuasive and evaluative. As a text type, the tourist brochure is a descriptive text in which there is a predominance of subjective language. In fact, although there is no possibility of direct interaction, the writer of the tourist brochure looks for a certain complicity with the tourist. This complicity is achieved by the utilization of personal expressions, stative verbs and descriptive adjectives.

#### 4.2. *Method of analysis*

In order to study the relationship between syntactic functions and the pragmatic function of topic in our database, the thirty news items and thirty tourist brochures were submitted to an empirical analysis. It could thus be determined whether the majority of the local topics were prototypically realized by clause initial or subject constituents in both subgenres or whether the topical entities were realized by other syntactic elements depending on the subgenre.

As previously mentioned, clausal topics were identified on the basis of the aboutness perspective referred to earlier, by their inclusion within the discourse topic, and by their referential continuity in the text (Givón, 1983, 1992). In fact, only those pragmatically salient entities (Reinhart 1982) that express what the clause is about and that are referred to in the following discourse have been considered topical. The local topics of the sixty texts usually make reference either to the main characters of the news items or to the different tourist areas of interest described in the brochures. In this analysis I have also estimated that there is only one topic per clause, on the principle that the topic is the entity chosen as the most topical in a given setting (Butler, 2003). As stated in section 2 the syntactic elements of the clause structure were identified on the basis of the syntactic frameworks established by Quirk (1985) and Downing and Locke (2002).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The reason why I have chosen Quirk and Downing and Locke's models for the syntactic analysis of new and known topics is that in FG only two syntactic functions are recognized: subject and object (García Velasco 2003). However, the variety of syntactic elements described in the models previously mentioned is more complete from a formal perspective, as they distinguish between the syntactic functions of subject, direct, indirect and prepositional objects, subject complement, object complement, predicator complement and adjuncts. In FG, syntactic functions assignment is sensitive to the Semantic Function Hierarchy: Agent > Goal > Recipient > Beneficiary > Instrument > Location > Time. This implies that a term as agent is the primary candidate for subject and that a term as goal is the prototypical candidate for object. Thus, the assignment of subject and object becomes more difficult as one goes further down the hierarchy



Regarding the relationship between known topics and subject, the formal realizations of given topics, subtopics and resumed topics have been considered as tokens of Givenness since they all fulfil a function in topic continuity and are co-referential to entities that have already been activated. As for the interdependence between new topics and subject, new topics have been considered only potentially topical as they do not emerge fully-fledged just through being introduced into a given discourse; they have to be established, and then kept alive through the subsequent references that are made to them (Butler, 2003). Therefore, only the formal realizations of the new clausal topics that have been maintained at least once after their first activation in discourse have counted for the purposes of this research.

The co-occurrence patterns among the syntactic functions that realize the clausal topics of both news items and tourist brochures were analysed through statistical techniques to provide an overall description of the similarities and differences between the two text types under research. Frequency counts were normalized to values in percentages to compare the whole sample of texts. Raw frequency counts could not be used for comparison across the two subgenres, as the number of clausal topics identified in the thirty tourist brochures (494) was smaller than the total amount of local topics counted in the thirty news items (730).<sup>8</sup> I have provided both the percentage of each syntactic token and a Chi-Square test using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), in order to measure the extent of the distribution of the syntactic functions that prototypically carry out the formal realizations of the clausal topics in the sample texts.

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(Moutaouakil, 1989: 6). Semantic functions, however, do not seem to play a part in topic assignment.

<sup>8</sup> In fact, even though the texts comprising the typology of texts chosen were similar in length (10,145 words in the journalistic texts against 9,873 words in the tourist texts), 1,365 clauses were counted in the news items while only 990 were found in the tourist brochures. The smaller number of topics identified in the travel texts may be due to the fact that in these the clausal topics are not always realized by a specific clause constituent; they sometimes remain implicit, either for purely rhetorical and persuasive reasons, for questions of linguistic economy or for their possible inference from the iconic elements in the brochure. On some occasions the topic is not made explicit either because it is recoverable from the general knowledge that the writer and the reader share, or because it can be deduced from the previous linguistic context. Thus, in travel texts it is not infrequent to find sentences which lack a local topic. In the following extract, for instance, all the information is focal and makes reference to the main topical entity about which information is given, Castleton. The propositional content of the sentence implies that Castleton is unique for its tourist features that can be seen both in the open air and underground: “[...] It would be hard to imagine anywhere with such an array of natural and historical features both above and below ground [...]” (Castleton, 1995).

### 4.3. Formal realizations of new and given topics in news items

This section analyses the syntactic realizations of the clausal topics found in the selection of thirty journalistic texts in an attempt to determine what motivates the writers of the journalistic texts to place the local topics in either P1 or away from the initial positions of the clause.

<u>Formal realizations</u>	<u>Absolute Values</u>		<u>Values in percentages</u>	
	<u>New topics</u>	<u>Known topics</u>	<u>New topics</u>	<u>Known topics</u>
Subject	67	587	93.1	89.2
Object	5	46	6.9	7.0
Adjunct	0	6	0.0	0.9
Predicator				
Complement	0	4	0.0	0.6
Subject Complement	0	2	0.0	0.3
Agent	0	5	0.0	0.8
Postmodifier	0	8	0.0	1.2
Total number	72	658	100	100

Table 1. Realizations of New and known topics in journalistic texts

The table above clearly shows that the new topics are typically realized in the news items by clause constituents that fulfil a subject function. In fact, 93.1% of the new topics identified in the data coincide with the clausal subject (in raw figures, 67 out of the 72 tokens analysed). The introductory clause shown in (1) provides an example in which the entity that carries out the aboutness property (a girl) coincides with the element that is located before the predication in declarative clauses. Only 6.9% of the new topics in the journalistic texts are realized by direct or prepositional objects (in raw figures, 5 out of the 72 tokens identified):

- (1) A 15 year old girl (Newtop, Subject) was found strangled and battered in a field near a lovers's lane yesterday. The body of Louise Sellar was discovered at 7am by a retired policeman walking his dog behind Bellinge Hospital ... (Girl, 15, strangled near lovers' lane. *The Daily Telegraph*. August 15, 1995)

With regards to the formal realizations of known topics in news items, like new topics they are also prototypically associated with the initial subject positions of the clause. 89.2% of the known topics coincide with the clausal element that carries out this syntactic function (in raw figures, 587 out of the 658 tokens counted). As a result, examples such as (2), in which the topic is realized by nominal groups or personal pronouns functioning as subjects, are predominant in this subgenre and display the tendency of using nominal subjects to refer to the participants about which information is given in the discourse (Perfetti and Goldman, 1974):

- (2) ... The pilot (Givtop) was 36-year-old Ian Fraser, a major serving with 47th Regiment Royal Artillery at Thorney Island, West Sussex. He (Givtop) was with his wife, Wg Cdr Sulvia Bibson, 44, a French linguist based at RAF Uxbridge.

The two other passengers (Givtop) were the couple's friends Sqn Ldr Paul Lockwood, 36, also based at RAF Uxbridge, and his wife ... (Military Officers killed in air crash; *The Daily Telegraph*, August 14, 1995).

Although with a much smaller rate of frequency (7%; in raw figures, 46 out of the 658 tokens analysed), clausal topics realized by personal pronouns and nominal groups functioning as direct or prepositional objects have also been identified in the thirty news items. Givón (1983, 1992), for example, makes reference to the topical possibilities of the clausal entities activated both by subject and object elements. As the following extract shows, there are two topics materialized in two personal pronouns (him, it) as direct objects:

- (3) ... Rescuers found him (Givtop) (Tom Willacy) and he was taken 80 miles to Glasgow Royal Infirmary. His leg was packed in ice provided by a fish factory, but surgeons were unable to save it (Givtop). (Fisherman phones home for help after leg is severed; *The Guardian*, August 11, 1995).

As can be appreciated in Table 1, known topics are also realized in the news items by other clause elements such as adjuncts (I have nothing but praise for this incredibly brave man),<sup>9</sup> predicator complements (Croatia last night blamed rebel Serbs for the attack...),<sup>10</sup> agents (...More than a million Jerry Garcia neckties have been sold in the United States; a Beverly Hills hotel suite was reshaped by the guitarist...),<sup>11</sup> postmodifiers (Suspicion for the attack has fallen on the small band of Sikh separatists),<sup>12</sup> and finally, subject complements (It was still the Dead ... who made most money from concerts).<sup>13</sup> However, these syntactic and semantic elements reach the rate of only 3.8% of the total tokens analysed. In raw figures, only eight postmodifiers, six adjuncts, five agents, four predicator complements and two subject complements with a topical function have been identified in the thirty news items. From the outset the journalist seems to activate the new and known topical entities about which information is given in the clauses of the news items. The initial position of the clause, where the subject is prototypically located, is reserved for the presentation of the topics. However, the mid and final slots, where objects, adjuncts and agents are prototypically placed, are used to introduce the most relevant information the writer wishes to transmit about the topical entities. In this way, Firbas' principle of Communicative Dynamism is safeguarded and the understanding of the message is made easier for the

<sup>9</sup> Taken from the news items "Fisherman phones home for help after leg is severed". The constituent "for this incredible brave man" can be located in the initial position of the sentence. This has led me to consider this element as an adjunct. As Quirk (1985) states adverbials are characterized by their mobility within the structure of the clause.

<sup>10</sup> "BBC reported killed in Croatia" (*The Guardian*, 10.08.1995)

<sup>11</sup> "Leader of Grateful Dead, Jerry García, dies in clinic" (*The Guardian*, 10.08.1995)

<sup>12</sup> "Car bomb kills Punjab minister" (*The Daily Telegraph*, 01.09.1995)

<sup>13</sup> "Leader of Grateful Dead, Jerry García, dies in clinic" (*The Guardian*, 10.08.1995)

reader. Thus, the empirical analysis of the sample of news items shows the journalist's clear intention to make clausal topics (either new or known) match up with subject constituents, usually located at the beginning of the clause in initial position. This clearly conflicts with Dik's claim (1989, 1997) that new topics tend to be located toward the final slot of the clause.

#### 4.4. Formal realizations of new and given topics in tourist brochures

I now turn to analysing the new and known topics of the tourist brochures and determine whether the same syntactic patterns are followed in the two subgenres or whether there are quantitative and qualitative differences in the formal realization of clausal topics in both text types.

<u>Formal realizations</u>	<u>Absolute Values</u>		<u>Values in percentages</u>	
	<u>New topics</u>	<u>Known topics</u>	<u>New topics</u>	<u>Known topics</u>
Subject	22	317	68.8	68.6
Object	2	62	6.3	13.4
Adjunct	3	55	9.3	11.9
Predicator Complement	2	10	6.3	2.2
Subject Complement	3	0	9.3	0.0
Postmodifier	0	18	0.0	3.9
Total number	32	462	100	100

Table 2. Realizations of New and Known topics in travel texts

As can be seen in table 2, as in the news items, in the tourist brochures most of the new topical entities are also realized by subject constituents (68,8%, 22 out of 32 tokens). However, the rate of frequency of topical entities realized by elements that fulfil this syntactic function decreases considerably in this type of text. Moreover, as can be noted in examples (4) and (5), although the new topics correlate with the function of subject, typically associated with the initial slot of the clause, the new topical referents are preceded either by an -ed clause or a 'there' presentative construction that postpone their activation in discourse:

- (4) Sheltered by the reef that encircles this beautiful, uncrowded island, Bermuda (New topic) is a relaxing destination with a distinctive atmosphere reflecting the traditions of over 400 years as a British Colony ... (*Bermuda, British Airways Holidays*, 1996).
- (5) There is a place in Middle England that is waiting to be discovered. North West Leicestershire (New topic) is literally brimming over with things to do and places to go. Something for everyone ... (*Welcome to North West Leicestershire*).

Though with a lower value in percentages, the new topics in the tourist brochures are also realized by other clausal elements such as adjuncts and subject complements

(9.3% respectively), and objects and predicator complements (both with a rate of 6.3%). As shown in (6) and (7), these syntactic elements tend to be located towards the mid/final slot of the clause in the unmarked pattern and, by placing the topical entities in these syntactic positions, the travel writer postpones the introduction of the topic:

- (6) Half way along Crete's northern coast between Heraklion and the island's western most point is the seaside town of Rethymnon (Newtopic, Subject complement) ... (*Crete, Rethymnon. Olympic Holidays, 1995*)
- (7) Arriving at the Candlelight (Newtop, Adjunct) you find the warm and sincere type of welcome which only a family-run small Irish Hotel can supply ... (*The Candlelight Inn*)

Regarding the realization of known topics in the travel texts, after analysing syntactically the elements of the clause that carry out topical information in this subgenre, it has been found that 68.6% of the known topics identified (317 out of the 462 tokens) overlap with the subject of the clause. Note that the rates of distribution are similar to those of new topics. So, the tokens that most frequently predominate are those in which the clausal topic coincides with the element that fulfils this syntactic function:

- (8) Beautiful beaches, warm blue sea and sun-drenched days virtually year-round, Barbados (Newtop) certainly offers all the features of a tropical island. Its people (subtop) are especially warm and welcoming, and there's still an inescapable colonial feel that adds to the island's unique atmosphere and special style ...
- Barbados (Givtop) is not as scenic and lush as some of its more mountainous neighbours, but touristically, it (Givtop)'s the English speaking Caribbean's most developed and sophisticated island, with a wide range of round-the-clock activities ... (*Barbados, Time Off. City Selection, 1995*)

There is a notable presence of adjuncts in the brochures with topical properties. In fact, 11.9% of the local topics identified are realized by constituents that fulfil this syntactic function (55 out of the 462 tokens analysed). On some occasions the topic coincides with a prepositional group functioning as adjunct (at the Leeds Castle); in others, as can be appreciated in the second paragraph of extract (9), it is realized by an adverbial group (here):

- (9) Strung out as far as the rock of Gibraltar, the aptly named Costa del Sol (coast of the sun) is Spain's southernmost coast line. Not only does this make it the warmest and sunniest spot in Spain, the resort is ideally placed for interesting excursions locally and further afield into neighbouring Gibraltar or Seville ...
- Fuengirola too has grown into a wintersun holiday paradise. The rain-lashed streets of the UK seem light years away from the blue skies and sunshine here (Givtop)! What's even better is that standards of service are high and the facilities modern (*Costa del Sol, The Sunshine Coast. Inspirations. Wintersun Issue 1, 1995/96*).

What is also notable is the predominance of direct and prepositional objects in the tourist brochures (13.4% of the total tokens analysed, in raw figures 62 out of 462 cases),<sup>14</sup> which is higher than in the news items, where the number of topics realized by those syntactic elements barely reaches the level of 7% of the total. On some occasions, given topics, subtopics and resumed topics, carried out formally by an object, are introduced in the mid slot of the clause by an imperative structure that invites the reader to visit the place that is being promoted. As in the case of adjuncts, the realization of topics by objects allows the writer to move the topical constituents away from the initial positions of the clause. In fact, they occupy a late rather than an early position in the structure of the English clause:

- (10) Visit the Ferrers Centre (subtopic), set in the beautiful lakeside setting of Staunton Harold, where you will find some of the finest contemporary crafts ... (*Welcome to North West Leicestershire*).

Postmodifiers (you will be struck by the magnificence of its location...),<sup>15</sup> whose frequency displays the rate of 3.9% of the total tokens identified (only 18 out of 462 tokens), also make reference to entities that contain topical information in the tourist brochures. Most of them are part of a complex nominal group located towards the end of the clause. Less frequent are the topics realized by predicator complements (only ten tokens identified; 2.2%), defined by Downing and Locke (2002:50) as those obligatory elements of the clause which are necessary to complete the predication and which do not fulfil the criteria established for objects and other complements. As Downing and Locke (2002:55-56) point out, the constituents following relational verbs (have, lack...), verbs of equal reciprocity (marry, resemble...), verbs of measure (cost, take...) and obligatory directional complements do not become subjects in a corresponding passive clause because there is no passive counterpart. Extract (10) provides an example (Port El Kantaoui):

- (11) For those for whom the history class was an excuse for a couple of hours off in the afternoon, spare us a few moments and we'll convince you that a brief delve into the past may be the answer why you should consider a holiday in Tunisia ...

Head further south and you'll come to Port El Kantaoui (subtopic). Centred around

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<sup>14</sup> 41 direct objects and 21 prepositional objects have been counted in the text samples. In the sentence 'you may wish to join in the locals' favourite pastimes, such as sailing, surfing, swimming, diving or fishing...' (Western Australia), "join in" has been analysed as a verbal form that requires a prepositional object. It has not been considered as a phrasal verb followed by a direct object. As Downing and Locke (2002) point out it is not possible to separate the verbal form from the preposition in this type of construction or even locate the object constituent between the verb and the preposition. However, other combinations such as: "If after all that you still have energy for more you can take in the walled rose garden, of Forge and Craft Centre..." (Stanford Hall, Lutterworth, Leicestershire), admit the possibility that the object be placed between the verbal form and the adverbial particle. In these cases the clause elements that realize the topic have been syntactically analysed as direct objects: "you can take the walled rose garden in".

<sup>15</sup> Example taken from the tourist brochure "Castleton".

a large international marina, Port El Kantaoui is a 'self contained resort with fashionable boutiques, an array of restaurants selling traditional European dishes, and a variety of bars and clubs ranging from the sophisticated to the small and friendly ... (Tunisia. A Living History Lesson. Inspirations. Wintersun Issue 1, 1995/96).

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

The results of the analysis carried out confirm that clausal topics tend to be prototypically realized by subjects in both news items and tourist brochures. However, new and known topics have been found to be more frequently located in the mid and final positions of the clause in the tourist brochures than in the news items. While in the journalistic texts the correlation between topic and subject reaches the rates of 93.1% and 89.2% for new and given topics respectively, in the tourist brochures this matching is represented by 68.8% and 68.6% of the total tokens of new and known topics analysed. This increases the variety of clause elements that can also carry out topical information in the tourist brochures and decreases, to a certain extent, the correlation between topic and subject in this type of texts.

Regarding new topics, 31.2% of the introductory topics identified in the brochures are realized by other clause constituents which function as prepositional or direct objects (6.3%), adjuncts (9.3%), subject complements (9.3%) and predicator complements (6.3%). On the other hand, in the news items only 6.9% of the new topics are realized by a clause element that occupies a non-subject position.

As far as the known topics are concerned, 31.4% of the given, sub- and resumed topics identified in the travel texts are realized by objects (13.4%), adjuncts (11.9%), postmodifiers (3.9%) and predicator complements (2.2%). However, in the journalistic texts only 10.8% of these correlate with a clause element that fulfils a syntactic function different from the subject. Quantitatively speaking, 7.0% of the known topics activated in the news items are realized by direct and prepositional objects. Less frequently predominant are the topics realized by postmodifiers, predicator complements, adjuncts, agents and subject complements, as they barely reach the rate of 3.8% of the total.

The Chi-Square analysis provided below also reveals significant differences in the syntactic realizations of the clausal topics between the journalistic and travel texts. Comparing the observed values of frequency with those which would be expected if there was no association between frequency of syntactic features and text type, the realization of both new and known topics by subjects is shown to be more relevant in the news items than in the tourist brochures. The expected count for subjects is 592.3 in the journal texts and 400.7 in the travel texts and the observed frequencies account for 654 and 339 respectively. However, the statistical backup reveals a different syntactic patterning in the case of objects, adjuncts, predicator complements, subject complements and postmodifiers as their frequencies of distribution are more significant in the tourist brochures than in the news items. In fact, regarding direct and prepositional objects, the expected count is 46.4 in the tourist brochures and 68.6 in the news items. The observed count is 64 in the former, but only 51 appear in the latter. As for adjuncts, the expected count is 25.82 in the travel texts and 38.18 in the journal

texts and the observed frequencies account for 58 and 6 respectively. Finally, with regards to postmodifiers and predicator complements, the expected counts are 10.49 and 6.46 respectively in the tourist brochures and 15.51 and 9.45 in the news items. The observed counts are 18 and 12 in the former, but only 8 and 4 appear in the latter. A similar pattern is found with subject complements. The expected counts are 2.02 in the tourist brochures and 2.98 in the news items and the observed frequencies account for 3 and 2 respectively. Only the frequency of agents follows a distribution similar to the rates of the subject function in both subgenres. In fact, the expected count is 2.98 in the news items and 2.02 in the tourist brochures and the observed frequencies account for 5 and 0 respectively. Thus, the degree of deviation from the null hypothesis of no association between syntactic realizations and text type varies greatly from one syntactic function to another in the sample texts.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Also notice that the category of Predicator Complement has been eliminated from the second revised edition of Downing and Locke (2006), the relational types being subsumed under non-prototypical direct objects, the others under types of complement. However, in order to maintain the maximum variety of syntactic functions within the English clause (see note 7), for the purposes of this study I have adopted the previous version of the editions of 1992 and 2002 in which the authors draw a clear boundary between the functions of direct object and predicator complement.



## FEATURES TEXT Crosstabulation.

		NEWS ITEMS	TOURIST BROCHURES	TOTAL
SUBJECT	Count	654	339	993
	Expected Count	592.3	400.7	993
OBJECT	Count	51	64	115
	Expected Count	68.6	46.4	115
ADJUNCT	Count	6	58	64
	Expected Count	38.18	25.82	64
AGENT	Count	5	0	5
	Expected Count	2.98	2.02	5
PREDICATOR COMPLEMENT	Count	4	12	16
	Expected Count	9.54	6.46	16
SUBJECT COMPLEMENT	Count	2	3	5
	Expected Count	2.98	2.02	5
POSTMODIFIER	Count	8	18	26
	Expected Count	15.51	10.49	26
TOTAL	Count	730	494	1224
	Expected Count	730	494	1224
		<b>Value</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Probability</b>
	Chi-Square Test	1.42259E-22	1	.000
		<b>Number of valid cases</b>		
		1224		

Table 3. Distribution of the Formal Realizations of Clausal Topics in News Items and Tourist Brochures

The writer of the travel texts moves the clausal topics away from the initial subject positions of the clause more frequently than the journalist. This pattern creates an expectation that the 'suspended topic' should have come earlier and is used by the travel writer to arouse the reader's interest for the area that is being promoted, and so obtain a positive response. Thus, the possible realizations of the topic by subject constituents decrease and the variety of syntactic elements (adjuncts, direct objects, predicator complements, subject complement) that activate topical referents in mid or final positions increase. In the news items, however, the initial slot of the clause, where the subjects are typically located, is more frequently reserved for the activation of the referents which carry out topical information. Understanding the message is thus made easier for the reader, as the topics about which information is transmitted at the clause level are identified clearly from the outset. This would explain why appreciable differences have been found in the syntactic realizations of topics in the two subgenres. As expected, they seem to be determined by the informative and persuasive functions that characterize the journalistic and travel texts respectively.

The analysis of the data also demonstrates that there is not always a one-to-one correspondence between the syntactic function of subject and the pragmatic dimension of topic. They are two distinct categories that fulfil two different functions: one, textual and pragmatic, the topic; the other, formal and syntactic, the subject. As Dik (1989, 1997) suggests, though (given) topics and subject tend to correlate in the same element, their interdependence is not complete. As for the relationship between new topics and subject, in contrast to Dik's (1989) claims, the results of the analysis show that new topics do not necessarily occur in the final positions of the clause.

The placement of clausal topics (either new or known) seems to be determined both by the speaker's or writer's rhetorical purpose in a specific context of communication and by the specific rules of the language in which s/he expresses him/herself (Mackenzie and Keizer, 1991: 175-6). This leads me to the conclusion that the expression component is not the only place where the order of constituents is established. It is also the result of the combination of pragmatic and contextual factors which play a key role in the expression level of the language and in its own language-specific regulations (Hengeveld, 2004a,b; 2005). In line with the Functional Discourse Grammar approach, I consider that the process of generating utterances starts with the encoding of the speaker's communicative intentions in a particular text and works down to articulation at the expression level. Thus, the assignment of topic in English is the product of top-down decisions made by the speaker / writer on the basis of contextual aspects and communicative intentions. These discourse considerations affect the grammar and need to be accounted for in a discourse sensitive grammar model (Moya 2005).

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