Contrasting choices in clause-initial position in English and Spanish: A corpus-based analysis

JULIA LAVID
Universidad Complutense de Madrid

1. INTRODUCTION[1]

The textual metafunction is conceptualised in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as having an enabling role with respect to the experiential and the interpersonal components, and includes different textual resources whose deployment may vary among different languages (Caffarel et al. 2004). Previous systemic-functional contrastive work on English and Spanish has focussed on structure-forming textual resources, such as thematicity and focality (Lavid, 2004a; 2004b; Lavid and Arús, 2002) using comparable original texts in both languages as linguistic evidence for the analysis. However, the precise nature of the interplay between the different metafunctional components has not been investigated contrastively, nor have translations been used as data, together with original texts.

Using material from a parallel corpus of original and translated fiction texts in both English and Spanish, the present study focuses on a textually-prominent choice, namely, clause-initial position, and analyses what kinds of elements within the interpersonal and experiential structure of the clause are typically preferred in English and Spanish in this position. The analysis also considers the language-specific preferences in the mapping between interpersonal and experiential elements and the structural changes which affect them during the translation process in both directions.

This paper has three main purposes. First, to show what meanings from the experiential and the interpersonal configurations are preferred by each langua-

ge when initiating messages; second, to establish whether there are language-specific preferences in the mapping between interpersonal and experiential elements in clause-initial position; third, to investigate the structural changes which occur in clause-initial position during the translation process from one language into another.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 presents the research questions which underlie the current investigation. Section 3 describes the research methodology used to address the proposed research questions, including the data used and the procedure followed. Section 4 presents the results of the corpus analysis. Finally, section 5 discusses the results and provides some concluding remarks.

2. Research questions

The study focuses on three main research questions:

1. What kinds of elements within the interpersonal and experiential structure of the clause are typically preferred in clause-initial position in English and Spanish?
2. Are there any language-specific preferences in the mapping between interpersonal and experiential elements in clause-initial position in English and Spanish?
3. What types of structural changes affect these preferences in the translation process? Can one identify translation patterns in both directions of the translation?

The approach undertaken in this paper is functionally-oriented, using categories and notions from Systemic-Functional Linguistics. It is also a corpus-based investigation, since it uses the results of empirical corpus analysis to reach conclusions on contrastive and translation choices in English and Spanish.

3. Research methodology
3.1. Data

The data used for analysis is a sample of 240 sentence pairs (120 original English sentences and their translations into Spanish; 120 original Spanish sentences and their translation into English). The sample was extracted from a parallel (translation) corpus of fiction texts which was beginning to be compiled by the author and colleagues at Universidad Complutense (see Lavid, 2008) at the time when the current study was carried out.

3.2. Procedure

The empirical analysis of the data combined two complementary types of analysis: the qualitative and the quantitative.

The qualitative analysis investigated three types of issues:

1. The types of elements from the interpersonal and the experiential structures of the clause which occur in clause-initial position in the sample corpus. The choices are *Subject, Finite, Predicator, Complement and Adjunct* as candidates from the interpersonal structure. The choices from the experiential structure of the clause are *1st participant roles (e.g.: Senser, Actor, Carrier, etc..)* and *non-1st participant roles (i.e., Goal, Beneficiary/Recipient, Circumstance, Phenomenon, Attribute, Verbiage, Empty,* and *Process.*
2. The mappings between interpersonal and experiential roles in clause initial position.
3. The structural changes affecting initial elements during the translation process from Spanish to English and vice versa.

The quantitative analysis involved the counting and annotation of data in an SPSS database, its frequency display in graphical format, and the statistical analysis of the data using the Chi-square test.

4. Analysis Results

The results of the empirical analysis are presented in graphical form, and explained in detail in each subsection. We begin with the types of elements from the interpersonal and the experiential structures of the clause which occur in clause-initial position in the sample corpus: subsection (4.1) deals with interpersonal choices, while subsection (4.2) focuses on experiential roles. Subsection (4.3) is dedicated to the mappings between interpersonal and experiential roles in clause-initial position and subsection (4.4) concentrates on the translation patterns in both directions of the translation which can be derived from the analysis.
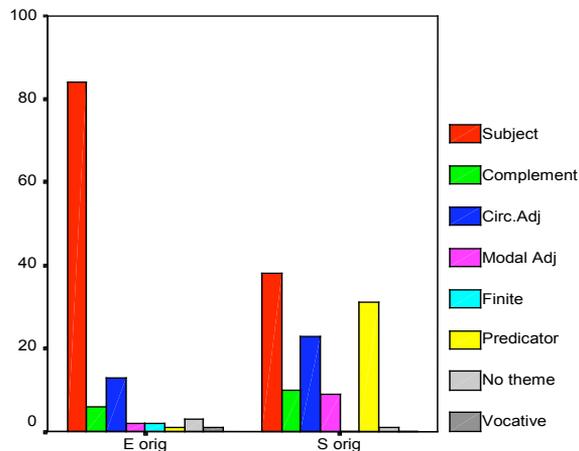
4.1. Interpersonal roles in initial position

The kinds of interpersonal roles which may appear in clause-initial position both in English and Spanish are the following: *Subject, Finite, Predicator, Complement* and *Adjunct.*

As shown in graph 1, which presents the contrastive distribution of interpersonal roles in clause-initial position in English and Spanish, the most frequent choice in English original texts is the *Subject* role (69%), while other *non-Subject* roles (including *Circumstantial Adjuncts* and *Complements*) are rather infrequent choices in the English texts, taking up only 31% of the distribution.

By contrast, the most frequent choice in the Spanish original texts is *non-Subject* (66%), while *Subjects* only take up 34% of the distribution. The most frequent *non-Subject* elements are *Predicators* (26.7%), and *Adjuncts* (25%), while *Complements* only take up 8% of the distribution.

When comparing these choices in original English and Spanish texts, it can be observed that English prefers to initiate clauses with the *Subject* element, while

Spanish prefers to use non-Subject elements: *Predicators*, *Adjuncts* or *Complements*. The difference in these proportionalities is statistically significant, as shown in Graph 1 (absolute numbers in the vertical axis).
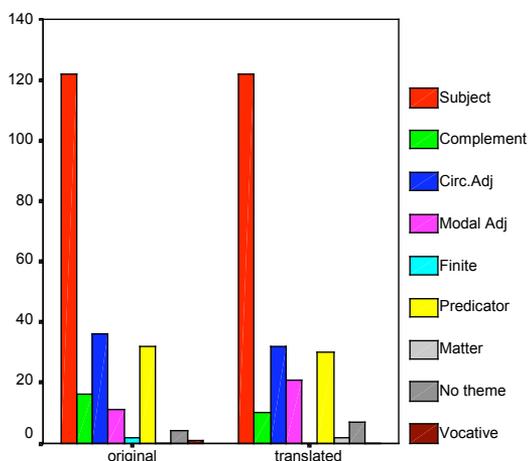

Graph 1: Distribution of interpersonal roles in initial position (original texts) (p<0.0001)

Interestingly, when we observe the choices in translated texts a similar pattern arises. While the English translations preserve the choice of the *Subject* as the most common one (70%), the Spanish translations show a preference for non-Subject roles (65.1%), evenly distributed between *Predicators* and *Adjuncts*, while *Complements* only occur 8% of the time. The difference in these proportionalities is statistically significant (p<0.0001), as shown in Graph 2 below.
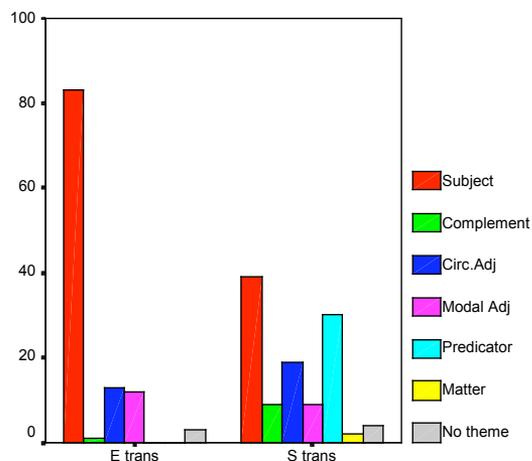
Graph 2: Distribution of interpersonal roles in initial position (translated texts) (p< 0.0001)

This perceived similarity is an indication that translators of both languages tend to preserve the language-specific tendencies observed in original texts. However, in order to check whether these observed patterns were real or just due to chance, a statistical analysis was carried out comparing the distributions in original versus translated texts in both languages. The analysis revealed that the differences were not statistically-significant, as shown in Graph 3 below, which represents the combined totals from both English and Spanish data.

Graph 3: Comparative distribution of initial interpersonal elements (originals vs translations) p= NS

These results indicate that the perceived tendency to preserve language-specific patterns in the translation process is a real phenomenon in the sample analysed, which can be generalised to the population of narrative texts from which the sample was extracted.

4.2. EXPERIENTIAL ROLES IN INITIAL POSITION

The choices from the experiential structure of the clause are *1ˢᵗ Participant roles (e.g. Senser, Actor, Carrier, etc...)*, and *non-1ˢᵗ Participant roles (i.e., Goal, Beneficiary/Recipient, Circumstance, Phenomenon, Attribute, Verbiage, Empty,* and *Process)*.

In the English original texts, the most frequent choice is *1ˢᵗ Participant role*, taking up 66% of the cases, while the remaining 34% is distributed among different roles such as *Circumstantials* (12.5%), *Empty* elements (8.9%), and small amounts of other roles (12.6%).

In the Spanish original texts, by contrast, the most frequent choice is evenly distributed between the *Process* (33.9%) and the *1ˢᵗ Participant roles* (34.8%), followed at a distance by other experiential roles such as *Circumstantials* (15.1%), and *Beneficiary/Recipient* (8.9%). The difference in these proportionalities is statistically significant (p<0.0001).
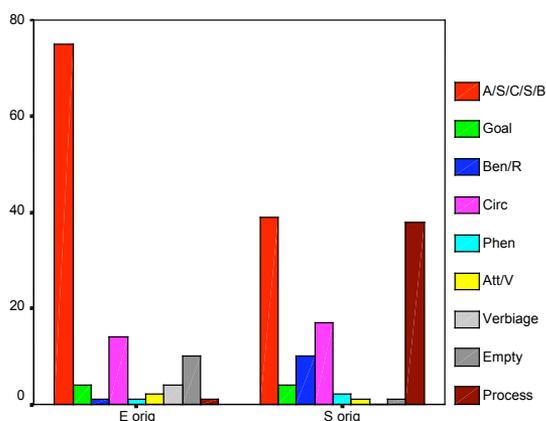
Graph 4: Distribution of experiential roles in initial position (original texts)

A similar pattern arises in the translated texts: while English prefers to choose *1st participant roles* as experiential elements in first-initial position (69.6%), Spanish distributes the choice evenly between the *Process* (32.1%), the *1st Participant roles* (29.4%), the *Circumstantials* (19.6%), and the *Beneficiary/Recipient* (19.5%). The difference in these proportionalities is also statistically significant, as shown in Graph 5 below:
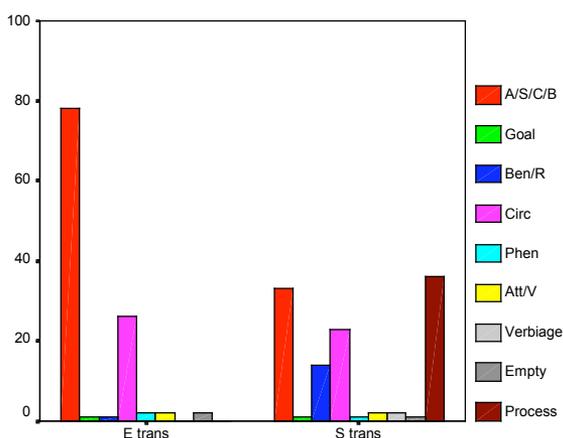

Graph 5: Distribution of experiential roles in initial position (translated texts (p<0.0001)

As in the interpersonal choices which were presented in section 4.1 above, the observed similarity between the patterns found in original texts and in translations was subject to a statistical analysis to check whether these observed patterns were real or just due to chance. This time, and in order to simplify the graph, the experiential roles were grouped into two main choices: *1st Participant roles* (PR) or *non-1st participant roles*, and the differences in their distribution between original and translated texts were statistically analysed using the Chi-square test. The analysis revealed that the differences were not statistically significant, as shown in Graph 6 below.

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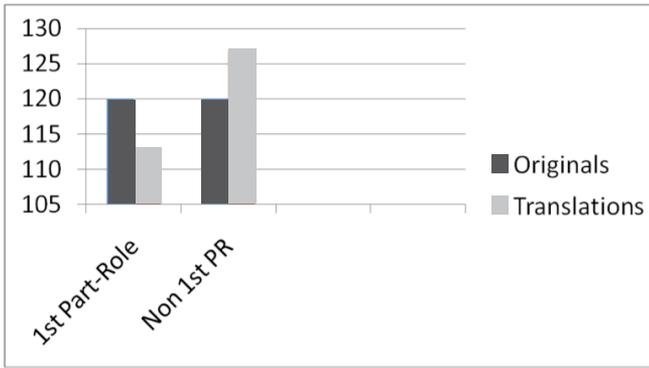
Graph 6: Comparative distribution of initial elements (originals vs translations) p= NS

This section concentrates on the mappings between experiential and interpersonal elements in clause-initial position in both languages.

In the English original texts, the *Subject* and the *Complement* roles attract the largest number of conflations with different experiential elements, while other interpersonal elements, such as *Adjuncts* or *Predicators* are limited in their conflational potential.

The Subject role conflates with *1st Participant Roles* in most cases, as illustrated in example (1). Other less common conflations are with *Empty Themes*, as in example (2), and with *Goals*, as in example (3).

(1)

| I	was glad of it (JE)
Subject/Carrier	

(2)

There	was no possibility of taking a walk that day (JE)
Subject/Empty	

(3)

Fresh editions of every paper	had been sent up by our news agent (MSH)
Subject/ Goal	

Complements conflate with elements such as *Phenomenon*, *Attributes*, *Beneficiary/Receiver* or *Verbiage*, but the frequency of these conflations is rather low, in comparison with the one observed for the *Subject* element. These mappings are graphically displayed in graph 7 below.
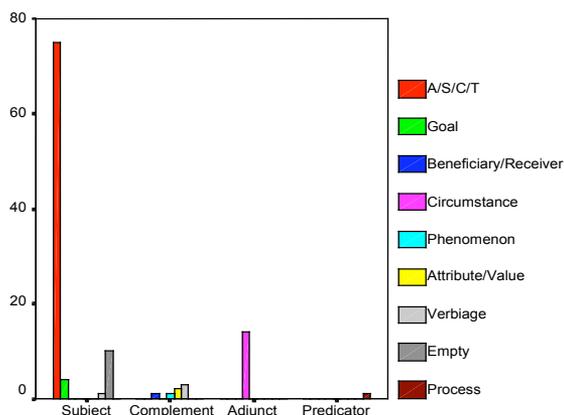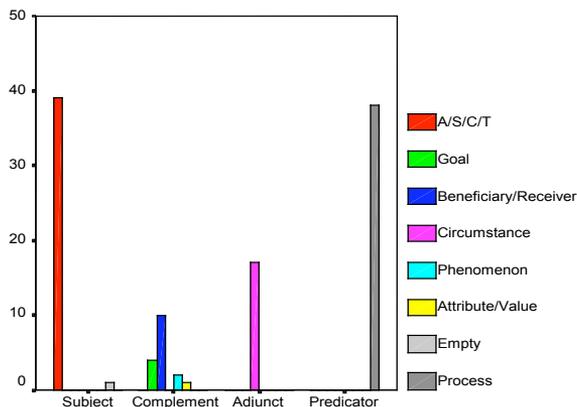

Graph 7: Metafunctional mapping of initial elements in English (p<0.0001)

If we compare graph 7 with graph 8 below some interesting differences between both languages become apparent. For example, while the conflation between *Subject* and *1st participant roles* is very frequent in both languages, English shows a higher tendency to conflate the *Subject* role with *Empty* elements, as illustrated by example (2) above. This can be explained by the fact that in English declarative clauses the *Subject* is an obligatory slot which must always appear in initial position preceding the *Predicator*, and must always be filled (even with experientially empty elements).

In Spanish, by contrast, the *Subject* is not obligatorily attached to clause-initial position in declarative clauses, since its position is influenced by different factors, and does not have to be overtly marked as in English, but can be a covert category realised by verbal inflections. Among the factors which have been hypothesized as determining the position of the *Subject* in Spanish, a key one is the variable definiteness of the Subject. Thus, López de Meirama (1997) found a correlation between the position of the Subject with respect to the main Verb and the degree of definiteness of the NP realising it, such that NPs that were relatively high on the definiteness hierarchy (i.e., proper nouns, personal pronouns, deictic determiners) appeared before the Verb, while those which were relatively low on the hierarchy (NPs without determiner) appeared after the Verb. Other factors which have been hypothesized are of a discourse-pragmatic nature, as will be explained in section 4.4.1 below.

The difference in the manifestation and behaviour of the *Subject* role in both languages also explains the much higher frequency of *Predicators* conflating with *Processes* in clause-initial position in Spanish: in these cases, the *Subject* is either covertly expressed through verbal inflection or, if lexically realised, appears in postverbal position.

Another interesting difference is the much higher frequency of both *Beneficia-ry/Receiver* and *Goal* experiential roles conflating with the element *Complement* in clause-initial position in Spanish, in comparison with the very low frequency (in the case of *Beneficiary/Receiver*) or absence (in the case of *Goal*) of this conflation in English. This can be explained by the strong tendency in English to place the *Subject* in clause-initial position which attracts the conflation with different experiential elements. The result is the creation of passive structures as in example (3) above. Spanish, by contrast, is not constrained to place the *Subject* in clause-initial position, which can be occupied by other conflations to give prominence to certain experiential elements within the clause.

Graph 8: Metafunctional mapping of initial elements in Spanish (p<0.0001)

4.4. Translation patterns

This section analyses the most frequent structural changes occurring in the translation process from English into Spanish, and from Spanish into English. We will begin with the presentation of the preferences in the direction of the translation from English into Spanish.

4.4.1. Translation from English to Spanish

A number of patterns emerge in the translation process from English to Spanish. Some of these are predetermined by the language-specific preferences in the selection of interpersonal and experiential roles in clause-initial position. Others are caused by the different mappings between these roles. We will deal with each in turn in the following paragraphs:

1. SUBJECT ^ VERB => VERB (^ S)

The translation of the typical English word order pattern in declarative clauses (*Subject ^ Verb*) is most frequently translated by a word order structure in Spanish

introduced by the *Verb* with a covert or overt expression of the *Subject*. Example (4) below illustrates the first option: the *Subject* is covertly expressed through verbal inflection; the form 'nací' is made up of the lexical part of the verb 'nacer' (be born) and the verbal inflection '–í' which conflates temporal, person and number information. According to Alarcos Llorach (1994), the Subject in Spanish is usually expressed morphologically through the person and number markers in the verbal ending. Example (5) illustrates the second option: the *Subject* is overtly expressed but appears in postverbal position.

(4) *I*   *was born in the year 1632 (RC)*
     Nací   *en*   *el año 1632*
     'BE-born 3rd psg-past in   the year 1632'

(5) *A white rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her*
     Salió corriendo   *cerca de ella*   *un conejo blanco de ojos rosados*
     'GO out-3rd psg- past running close by her   a white rabbit with pink eyes'

This translation pattern can be accounted for by the different word order patterns which characterize affirmative declarative clauses in both languages. While in English the *Subject* is obligatory, in Spanish it is only overtly realised by lexical means when it cannot be recovered from the context. In example (4) it can be recovered from the context since it refers to the Speaker, therefore it is not overtly expressed by lexical means, but is only morphologically realised as a person marker in the verbal inflection.

Interestingly, while most existing accounts of Spanish word order assume that the most 'natural' or 'basic' word order of an affirmative sentence is that of *Subject + Verb + Object* (SVO), and that other combinations come second or are a minority, in our data the second most frequent combination (after the one where the Subject is covertly realised in the verbal morphology), is the one where the Subject comes after the Verb (VS), as in example (5) above. This seems to follow a similar tendency to that reported for Portuguese, a typologically-related language (Maia 1998).

The factors which have been hypothesized as responsible for this post-verbal position are of a different nature, ranging from the nature of the Verb, to the information status of the participant functioning as the *Subject* (López de Meirama 1997, 2006). In example (5) above, the NP realising the *Subject* is both indefinite and new, and in terms of end-weight it can be considered as long. One could hypothesize that these three features of the Subject could be held responsible for its postverbal position.

2. CIRCUMSTANTIAL FRONTED

There is a tendency for *Circumstantial* elements in English to be fronted to initial position when translated into Spanish, as in example (6) below, where the temporal Adjunct '*one morning*' is fronted in the Spanish translation. This tendency is a reflection of the unmarked status of *Circumstantials* in Spanish and its rather

flexible word order structure. In general, Spanish uses *Circumstantial* Adjuncts in clause-initial position more often than English.

(6) *He called me one morning into his chamber (RC)*
     Una mañana   me   llamó   a su alcoba
     'One morning   me   CALL-3rd psg Past   into his chamber'

3. CHANGE OF SUBJECT

(7) *I would be satisfied with nothing but going to sea. (RC)*
     Mi único anhelo   era navegar
     'My only wish   BE-3rd psg going to sea'

Although in a rather small proportion, one of the changes observed in the translation from English into Spanish is the change of the *Subject*. There are several motivations for this change (some of them mentioned below under the 5th type of translation change), so the change does not follow a single pattern. In example (7) above, given the different experiential configurations of the *Verb* in English and Spanish ('*I would be satisfied*' vs. '*No me satisfacería*'), the translator opts for a nominalization ('mi único anhelo') rather than the more literal translation ('*No me satisfaría nada tanto como navegar*'), which would have preserved a similar structure to the English original but would result in a less clear rendering into Spanish.

4. IT / THERE SUBJECT OMITTED

The greater tendency in English to use certain constructions (i.e. Predicated theme and Empty theme constructions) causes changes to be made in both directions of translation. This is confirmed by the higher frequency of Empty themes in original English sentences than in original Spanish sentences in our sample corpus. Moreover, in the process of translation from English into Spanish, the *Subject* elements 'there' or 'it' are dropped, as illustrated in examples (8) and (9) below:

(8) *There was nothing so very remarkable in that*
     La cosa   no tenía   nada de muy especial
     'The thing   not HAVE-3rd psg-past   nothing very special'

(9) *It occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this*
     Decidió__   que ciertamente, le debía de haber llamado mucho la atención
     'DECIDE-3rd psg past   that certainly,   her must have called much his attention'

5. REORGANISATION OF THEMATIC STRUCTURE (including Subject Change)

This is one of the most frequent types of changes, but it is by no means a unified category. It includes many types of restructuring, often entailing a change of *Subject* in the translation. In general, the restructuring is originated by the following processes:

1. Lexico-semantic changes in the conceptualisation of the event, as in example (10) below. Here the original event in the English clause is conceptualised as someone 'hearing' something from somebody. However, in the Spanish translation the event is conceptualised as a verbal event where someone 'says' something to someone. This lexico-semantic change of the verb causes a restructuring in the experiential and the interpersonal configuration of clausal elements.

(10) *Until she heard from Bessie (JE)*
       Hasta que   *Bessie*   *le*   *dijera*
       'Until   *Bessie*   *her*   *TELL-3rd psg past subjunctive'*

2. Changes of perspective in the presentation of experiential roles, as in examples (11) and (12) below.

(11) *Fresh editions of every paper had been sent up by our news agent (MSH)*
       Nuestro vendedor de periódicos *nos*   *iba enviando*   *las ediciones de*
       todos los periódicos a medida que salían.
       'Our news agent   *us*   *GO- 3ʳᵈ psg sending fresh*   *editions of every*
       paper'

(12) *Tom was conducted to the principal apartment of a noble suite.*
       Condujeron   *a Tom*   *al principal aposento de palacio*
       'CONDUCT- 3ʳᵈ ppl past   *Tom*   *to the principal main apartment of a noble suite'*

In example (11) the English original sentence is presented from the perspective of the *Goal* ('*fresh editions of every paper*'), thus resulting in a passive sentence. By contrast, the Spanish translation chooses to present the same information from the perspective of the *Agent* ('*news agent*'), thus avoiding the use of a passive sentence which is much less used in this language.

In example (12), the writer chooses not to specify the *Agent*. Both the English and the Spanish versions reflect this decision, but use different strategies to express the same information. Since in English the expression of the *Subject* is the unmarked option in clause-initial position in declarative sentences, the element *Goal* ('*Tom*') is mapped onto the *Subject* interpersonal role, resulting in a passive construction. In Spanish there is no need to express the *Subject*, and therefore, the *Process* appears first, followed by the *Goal*.

4.4.2. Translation from Spanish to English

The translation patterns which emerge in the translation process from Spanish to English follow similar tendencies to the ones observed in the other direction of the translation. We will deal with each in turn in the following paragraphs:

1. *VERB (ffS) => SUBJECT ff VERB*

This translation pattern is the reverse of the one found in translation from English into Spanish, and is the result of the typological characteristics of each language, as illustrated in example (13):

(13) <u>*Recogió*</u>   *el papel*   *y se fue a su cuarto* (EZ)
       'PICK UP 3rd p sg.   the paper   and went to her room'
   *She picked up the paper and went to her room*

2. *INITIAL CIRCUMSTANTIAL KEPT OR MOVED FORWARD*

There is a tendency for *Circumstantial* elements in Spanish to be kept, as in example (14) below, or moved forward to initial position when translated into English, as in (15):

(14) *En la creciente oscuridad , Emma lloró hasta el fin de aquel día (EZ)*
       In the growing darkness, Emma wept until the end of that day

(15) *si había estado realmente en Secretaría todo ese tiempo (EP)*
       'if   HAD BEEN really in the Secretariat all that time'
       if during all this time it had really been in the Secretariat

An interesting phenomenon observed in our sample is the higher frequency of *Circumstantial* elements in clause-initial position in English translations than in English originals, as shown in graph 9 below. This may be due to the influence of translationese, that is, the tendency to use similar structures in the translation to the ones found in original texts. In this case, the higher frequency of *Circumstantials* in the Spanish originals may have influenced this higher frequency in the English translations.
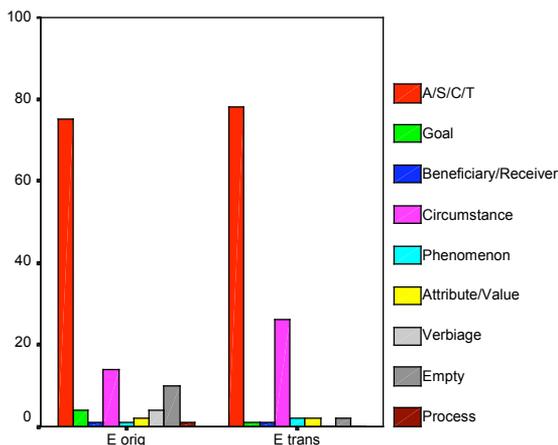
Graph 9: Initial experiential choices in English originals vs. translations

3. CHANGE OF SUBJECT (FRONTED COMPLEMENT IN SPANISH => S V C IN ENGLISH)

As in the reverse English to Spanish translation, the motivations for this change in Spanish to English translation are varied. However, a frequent change of *Subject* is caused when the English translator tries to preserve the same experiential structure as the one in the Spanish original, but has to accommodate the fixed word order requirements of English. This forces a conflation of the *Subject* with different types of participants, as in example (16) below, where the *Subject* in the English clause is conflated with the *Beneficiary*.

(16) *A los bueyes   les   pintaban   los cuernos con albayalde (LR)*
      'The oxen   them   PAINT- 3rd ppl. Past   the horns with lead'
      The oxen had their horns painted with white lead paint

4. IT / THERE SUBJECT ADDED IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

This is the result of the greater tendency in English than in Spanish to use certain constructions - i.e. Predicated Theme and Empty Theme constructions. In example (17) the SV construction has been translated by a different one in English beginning with the *Empty Subject* 'it'. In example (18) the clause starts with a *Verb* since the *Subject* is morphologically realised in the verbal inflection. In the English translation it is necessary to to fill the Subject slot in clause-initial position and this is achieved by introducing the Empty 'there' element.

(17) *Yo tengo para mí que...(EZ)*
      'I have for me that..'
      It is my belief that...

(18) *Siguió   el par de zapatos que se compró el Jefe (EP)*
      'FOLLOW-3rd psg past   the pair of shoes that BUY-3rd psg past the Chief'
      There followed the pair of shoes that the Chief bought himself

5. REORGANISATION OF THEMATIC STRUCTURE (INCLUDING SUBJECT CHANGE)

Under this category one can find different types of restructuring changes, often caused by similar processes to the ones mentioned for the translation from English into Spanish: the translated structures tend to reflect the language-specific tendencies in the presentation of information, characterised by different metafunctional mappings. The most pervasive type of change is the one which occurs when different perspectives are adopted in the presentation of experiential elements, as in examples (19) and (20) below.

In (19) the original Spanish clause presents the event from the perspective of the *Senser* element ('le'), which conflates with the Complement in the interpersonal arrangement. By contrast, in the English translation the event is presented from the perspective of the *Phenomenon* since the *Senser* is somehow included in the possessive determiner 'her'. As the clause is declarative, the unmarked conflation is with the Subject role in first initial position.

(19) *Eligió el asiento delantero, para que no le vieran   la cara*

	le	*vier-an*	*la cara*
Experiential	Senser	Process	Phenomenon
Interpersonal	Complement	Predicator + Covert Subject	Complement

She selected the seat farthest towards the front, so that her face   would not be seen

	her face	*would not be seen*
Experiential	Phenomenon	Process
Interpersonal	Subject	Predicator

In example (20) below, the Spanish original chooses to present the information from the perspective of the *Senser*, which conflates with the Complement function in the interpersonal arrangement of the clause. The *Phenomenon* is mapped onto the Subject ('el sello y el sobre') and presented in final position, probably because this element is heavy, informationally speaking.

(20)   *La engañaron, a primera vista   el sello y el sobre (EZ)*

	La	*engañaron*	*a primera vista*	*el sello y el sobre*
Experiential	Senser	Process	Circumstance	Phenomenon
Interpersonal	Complement	Predicator	Adjunct	Subject

In order to preserve the Spanish experiential arrangement, the English translator could have selected the *Senser* ('She') as the point of departure of the clause, mapping it onto the Subject and creating a passive clause, such as: 'She was deceived by the stamp and the envelope'. However, the translator has decided to present the event from the perspective of the *Phenomenon* ('the stamp and the envelope'), conflating it with *Subject* element in first-initial position, following the unmarked pattern of declarative clauses which characterises English.

The stamp and the envelope deceived her at first sight

	The stamp and the envelope	*deceived*	*her*	*at first sight*
Experiential	Phenomenon	Process	Senser	Circumstance
Interpersonal	Subject	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct

Table 1 and Graph 10 below summarise the distribution of the different types of translation strategies occurring from English to Spanish and from Spanish to English. The most common strategy is preserving the language-specific word order in declarative sentences: *Subject ^ Verb* for English and *V (S)* for Spanish. This is followed by the *Reorganisation of the thematic structure* in both languages and directions of the translation, and the high frequency of *Circumstantial* elements in initial position.

	Eng-Spa	%	Spa-Eng	%	Total
SV <=> V (S)	32	50	32	50	64
Circ.	7	29.1	17	70.8	24
Change S	3	75	1	25	4
It/there	3	33.3	6	66.6	9
Reorg. TS	14	50	14	50	28
	59		70		129

Table 1: Distribution of translation strategies in English and Spanish
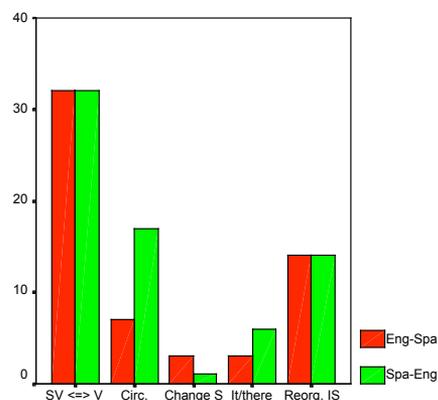
Graph 10: Frequency distribution of translation strategies in English and Spanish

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The results of the corpus-based analysis presented in this study indicate certain language-specific preferences in the choice of interpersonal and experiential elements in clause-initial position, and in the mapping between these roles. These can be summed up as follows:

English and Spanish present statistically-significant differences in the selection of interpersonal elements in clause-initial position. Thus, while the most frequent choice in English is the *Subject* element, Spanish presents the opposite

tendency selecting *non-Subject* elements in this position. This is probably due to the different typological features of each language: while English is characterised by a fixed word order sequence of constituents in declarative clauses with the *Subject* as an obligatory element, in Spanish the *Subject* is often a covert or implicit constituent, realised in the verbal morphology, which only becomes explicit under certain contextual constraints. Interestingly, the data used in this study indicate that there is a strong tendency in Spanish for the *Subject* to appear in postverbal position when it is explicitly realised as a nominal element. There are different motivations for this choice, but discourse factors of a textual nature – the information status of the participant(s) functioning as Subject– seem to play an important role in this choice, as some studies (López de Meirama 1997, 2006) have suggested.

The selection of experiential elements in clause-initial position in both languages can also be explained by the above-mentioned typological difference and the fact that the Subject in Spanish is often a covert constituent. Thus, in English we find *1st participant roles* as the first choice in clause-initial position, while Spanish distributes this choice evenly between the *Process* and *1st participant roles*.

The mapping between interpersonal and experiential roles in clause-initial position is also different in both languages: while in English the *Subject* attracts 80% of experiential material (most of it *1st participant roles*), Spanish presents a more distributed interplay. The wider conflational potential of the *Subject* role in English with different types of participants results in a higher tendency to passivisation than in Spanish.

With respect to the translation changes, we can observe that, in general, they follow certain patterns which can be explained by the language-specific preferences in the conflation of interpersonal and experiential constituents. Thus, for example, while the English original texts tend to use passive constructions where the Subject is conflated with *1st participant* roles, the corresponding Spanish translation does not preserve this construction and prefers to use the active construction, following the Spanish language-specific preferences. Conversely, in the Spanish to English translation process, the tendency in Spanish to select *non-Subject* participants in initial position causes a reordering of the participants in the English translation to preserve the English interpersonal order.

Spanish uses *Circumstantials* in clause-initial position more often than English. This is shown by the tendency to front these elements in the English to Spanish translation process, while clause-initial Circumstantials in the Spanish to English translation process tend to be maintained. The corpus analysis also showed that there is a higher frequency of *Circumstantials* in the English translations than in English original sentences, which may be due to the influence of the Spanish original version.

In general, it can be observed that translators tend to preserve the language-specific tendencies in the construction of translated messages in both languages, regardless of the resulting surface structures. Evidence of this is the lack of statistically significant differences between original and translated texts in the selection and mapping of interpersonal and experiential elements in clause-initial position, and the absence of instances of 'translationese' in both directions,

except for the higher frequency of *Circumstantial* elements in initial position in the English translations than in the English original texts.

Despite the preliminary nature of these results, based on a relatively small sample of original and translated clauses from a specific genre, they reflect language-specific tendencies which must be taken into consideration when comparing the ways in which English and Spanish construct messages, and when investigating the translation tendencies from one language into the other. As the analysis results have shown, English and Spanish seem to exploit their metafunctional resources differently in constructing messages. While the interplay between the interpersonal and the experiential choices seems to play a dominant role in the sequencing of clausal elements in English - characterised by an interpersonal rigidity and experiential mobility (Arús 2004: 178) - textual factors, mainly related to the information status of the overt *Subject* seem to exert a greater influence in Spanish. Further studies are needed to establish whether these results hold true outside the limited material used for the present investigation, but we hope this study proves to be a useful contribution in the right direction.

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