4. Word Order and Information Structure

In this chapter I discuss how information structure considerations (namely, focus and topicalization) modify the unmarked word order attested in Spanish in general and in Mexican Spanish in particular. The interaction between information structure and word order has been dealt with extensively in the OT literature, and so in this chapter I concentrate on two specific issues. The first one is to show how word order variation resulting from focalization in Mexican Spanish can be readily accounted for under the proposal developed in the previous chapter, on the one hand, and that the resulting analysis is consistent with previous optimality theoretic work on this area. The second issue relates to how topicalization in Mexican Spanish provides further support for the notion of the Pole, and for an analysis that appeals to this notion to explain word order phenomena. Specifically, I show how my proposal explains why the relative order of multiple topics in the left periphery is dependent on their semantic role.

4.1 Perturbations of the unmarked word order

Perturbations of the unmarked word order for different classes of predicates in declarative sentences in Spanish are widely attested, and this phenomenon has received considerable attention both in traditional grammars (see, for example, Gili y Gaya 1961) and in the theoretically-oriented literature (e.g. Bolinger 1954-55, Hatcher 1958, Meyer 1972, Contreras 1976, Silva-Corvalán 1983, Fant 1984, Vallduví 1992, Casielles-Suárez 1995, Zubizarreta 1998, inter alia). Some examples are presented below. The transitive sentences (1a-b) do not display the unmarked SVO word order, and the subjects of psych and unaccusative predicates in (1c) and (1d), respectively, appear in the preverbal position, contrary to what is observed in the unmarked case. The free translations of these examples are only meant to convey their approximate translation to English, and not their structural equivalence to the corresponding English forms (see §4.3 below).

(1)  a. Ayer compró Juan el periódico. Adv V S O
   y'esterday bought Juan the newspaper
   'Yesterday Juan bought the newspaper.'

   b. El periódico lo compró Juan. O V S
   the newspaper ACC-CL bought Juan
   'The newspaper, John bought it.'

   c. Los chocolates le gustan a Juan. S V IO
   the chocolates DAT-CL like. 3p to Juan
   'Chocolate, Juan likes.'

   d. Tu hermano llegó. S V
   your brother arrived
   'Your brother arrived.'

The standard diagnostic for determining that the word orders in (1) correspond to marked word orders is to test whether they can be felicitously uttered in contexts where the subject is focused, and if so, that the resulting analysis is consistent with previous work on this phenomenon. The sentences in (1) are infelicitous in such contexts.

Corresponding English forms (see §4.3 above)
Since the earliest theoretical works on Spanish listed above, perturbations of unmarked word order like those in (1) have been linked to information structure (focus, topicalization, discourse prominence, etc.). It is not possible to review in any detail all the different analyses of these perturbations that have been proposed in the literature. Rather, my working assumption will be that what all these examples have in common is that the preverbal XP corresponds to a topic, which is followed by one or more focal elements (see Vallduvi 1992, Zubizarreta 1998, 1999). Consequently, my analysis of the perturbations of the unmarked word order in (1) relies on the topic/focus articulation.

The relation between word order and information structure has been widely discussed in the OT literature (Legendre et al. 1995; Samek-Lodovici 1996; Costa 1998, 2001; Grimshaw and Samek-Lodovici 1998; Choi 1999, inter alia), particularly with respect to focalization. These analyses highlight the fact that OT is an ideal framework for dealing with information structure considerations and their relation to “optionality.” In representational frameworks like GB, word order permutations that do not result in truth-conditional differences are mostly unproblematic. To the extent that sentences like those in (1) meet a set of well-formedness conditions, they can simply be thought of as alternative options (subject to pragmatic considerations) for expressing the same truth-conditional content of the corresponding cases that display the canonical word order. With the development of notions like Economy of Movement and Economy of Structure, central notions for both Minimalism and OT syntax, optionality becomes a serious problem, though. If movement takes place exclusively to satisfy conditions on derivations or representations, then it can never be optional, strictly speaking. As such, either word order permutations like those in (1) are not optional or they directly falsify the hypothesis of Economy of Movement.

Most OT literature on this issue holds that word order permutations induced by information with respect to focalization are not optional. Rather, they result directly from the need to accommodate conflicts between the syntactic requirements that derive the unmarked word order and a number of discourse constraints codified as universal constraints. These constraints are not optional (Vallduvi 1992; Costa 1998, 1999; Grimshaw and Samek-Lodovici 1998; Choi 1999). This means that the interaction between syntax and information structure can be thought of as alternative options (subject to pragmatic considerations) for expressing the same truth-conditional content of the corresponding cases that display the canonical word order. However, as will be shown in the following sections, these alternative options are not always available, and the choice between them is determined by a number of discourse constraints that are not optional.

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163 The precise characterization of focus has been extensively debated in the literature, and many problematic issues remain to be solved. Here I simply assume the characterization of focus proposed in Halliday (1967), Rochemont (1986) and Kiss (1998). Terminological issues apart, these analyses propose that there are two fundamentally different kinds of focus: contrastive focus and presentational focus.

Contrastive focus expresses a quantification-like operation which involves exhaustive identification on a set of entities. As noted in Kiss (1998), in terms of its semantics contrastive focus represents the value of the variable bound by an abstract operator expressing exhaustive identification. An example from Hungarian is presented in (2).

(2) HUNGARIAN

Tegnap este MÁRINAK mutattam be Pétert.

'last night Mary introduced Peter.' (Kiss 1998: 245)

Example (2) expresses the exhaustive identification characteristic of contrastive focus, since it means that of set of individuals present in the domain of discourse, it was Mary and no one else that Peter was introduced to by the speaker.

I represent contrastive foci in small caps in boldface. As in Kiss (1998), these various diacritics indicate neither pitch accent nor differences in pitch accent.

In what follows, I adopt the basic conclusions of the Optimality-theoretical analyses of word order and information structure cited above. However, I argue that the notion of the Pole is crucial for understanding the relevant word order facts in Spanish. In the analysis that follows I will not take a strong stance on this debate. I will adopt the non-optionality approach as a working hypothesis, but I remain neutral with respect to the issue of whether or not word order variation can be truly optional in some cases.
the pragmatic readings of contrastive focus that follows from its expression of exhaustive identification.

(3) a. John's mother voted for Bill.
b. No, she voted for JOHN.

On the other hand, presentational focus simply corresponds to information that is not part of the common ground (the common ground being roughly the information shared by the speaker and the hearer). Consider the Hungarian example in (4).

(4) HUNGARIAN

Tegnap este be mutattam Pétert MARY.

'Last night I introduced Peter TO MARY.' (Kiss 1998: 247)

In contrast with (2), the presentational focus in (4) does not express exhaustive identification. Consequently, (4) does not imply that Mary was the only person that Peter was introduced to by the speaker. It merely presents Mary as "new" information that is not part of the common ground.

In relation to the correspondence between presentational focus and "new" information, Halliday (1967) suggests that presentational foci correspond to the constituent in the answer to a wh-question that corresponds to the wh-operator in the question, as in (5). This is a widely accepted diagnostic for presentational focus in other analyses that postulate the existence of two kinds of focus (Kiss 1998, Zubizarreta 1998), and I will make use of it in what follows. Languages can distinguish these two types of focus in various ways (syntactically, morphologically and intonationally) but the syntactic contrast observed in Hungarian examples above is particularly illustrative. As discussed in Kiss (1998), contrastive foci in this language must appear in the immediate preverbal position, as in (2). However, presentational foci (information focus in Kiss' terminology) are not subject to this restriction. Presentational focus must appear in the immediate postverbal position, as in (4). Hungarian and English have different categories of focus (contrastive and presentational focus). For example, in English, only non-contrastive foci can be extracted from a sentence, whereas in Hungarian, both contrastive and presentational foci can be extracted.

(5) a. Who screamed?
b. JOHN screamed.

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(5) a. Who screamed?
b. JOHN screamed.
we will see shortly. Rather, it seems that the differences that hold cross-linguistically are interpretive and pragmatic in nature. As noted in Kiss (1998), contrastive foci take scope, but presentational foci do not; presentational focus can project, but contrastive focus cannot. Also, as noted in Gundel (1999), every sentence has a presentational focus (see also Vallduví 1992 and Lambrecht 1994), but not every sentence has a contrastive focus. Accordingly, although I make use of word order diagnostics for distinguishing these two types of focus in Spanish, the reader is asked to keep in mind that no claim is made here as to whether these word order properties hold in other languages.

A final note on terminology is relevant here. When the focus corresponds to a single argument of the verb, as in (2-5), it is usually referred to as a narrow focus, a term I adopt in the analysis below. However, (descriptively, at least) the focus can correspond to a constituent larger than an argument, as in cases of VP, IP or sentence focus. In what follows I use the term focus domain (Lambrecht 1994) to refer to these cases.

4.2.1 Focus in Spanish

The analysis of focus that I develop concentrates on presentational focus and not on contrastive focus, for reasons to be outlined in what follows. For the purpose of defining the set of data that the analysis deals with, in this subsection I briefly describe the differences in word order between presentational and contrastive focus in Spanish.

In Spanish, focus of the subject often has very visible effects, since a constituent which occurs preverbally in the unmarked case, occurs instead in the post-verbal field. This phenomenon is termed (free) subject inversion (Bolinger 1954-55, Contreras 1976, Torrego 1984, Lambrecht 1994, Ordóñez 1998, Zubizarreta 1998). This holds across different varieties of Spanish. Some examples are presented in (6-7).

(6) P

\[ \text{Los discos los compró una muchacha.} \]

\[ \text{the records bought a girl} \]

(7) a. P

\[ \text{Está buscando una secretaria el jefe de la fábrica.} \]

\[ \text{is looking for a secretary the factory's foreman} \]

\[ \text{The factory's foreman is looking for a secretary.} \]

My sense is that in these cases the direct object corresponds to the tail (see fn. 1), i.e., it is material that is part of the common ground and that must appear in the postverbal field (see Vallduví 1992). Analyzing these cases requires a detailed account of the behavior of tails in Spanish which cannot be undertaken here, so I leave the analysis of XP-VOS sentences for future investigation.

OVS sentences are also compatible with an interpretation where both the subject and the verb are in focus (see Fant 1984, Zubizarreta 1998, Gutiérrez-Bravo 2000a).
In both Mexican Spanish and in the varieties of Spanish analyzed in Zubizarreta (1998) (Peninsular and Rioplatense Spanish), inverted subjects can correspond to either presentational or contrastive foci.

This is shown in (8-9), which correspond to my own data. The inverted subject in (8b) corresponds to the wh-operator in the question in (8a), and it is also compatible with the correction context in (9).

In other varieties of Spanish, the situation is even more complex. In the varieties of Spanish in Zubizarreta (1998) contrastive foci can also appear in situ (see also Fant 1984), even when they do not correspond to the subject. This is shown in (11). Furthermore, even when they do not correspond to the subject, they can also appear in situ (see also example 11 from Zumizarreta 1996). The distribution of contrastive focus is considerably more complex in other varieties of Spanish, especially in the varieties of Spanish in Zubizarreta (1998). In example 11, the contrastive focus appears in situ, even though it does not correspond to the subject.

Furthermore, as shown in (11), they can also appear in the final position of the sentence. Even when they do not correspond to the subject, they can also appear in situ (see also example 11 from Zubizarreta 1996). The distribution of contrastive focus is considerably more complex in other varieties of Spanish, especially in the varieties of Spanish in Zubizarreta (1998). In example 11, the contrastive focus appears in situ, even though it does not correspond to the subject.

Interestingly, Zubizarreta claims that the contrastive reading is available even when the focus does not bear the kind of pitch accent characteristic of contrastive foci. My impression is that this is also the case in Mexican Spanish, but experimental research is needed to support the validity of this claim.

Zubizarreta (1998) further claims that in the varieties of Spanish she considers, presentational foci can only appear in the sentence final position. My own research indicates that this is also the case in Mexican Spanish. However, when the subject in focus is highly definite and individuated (typically a proper name) it can also appear in its canonical preverbal position. This is shown in example (10), originally from Zubizarreta (1998).

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La camarera del hotel puso la VALIJA sobre la cama (y no el maletín).

The hotel's chambermaid put the SUITCASE on the bed, not the briefcase.


Las ESPINACAS detesta Pedro (y no las papas).

The spinach hates Pedro and not the potatoes.

My data on fronted and in-situ contrastive focus in Mexican Spanish is too scant for me to draw any conclusions at this point. Speakers of Mexican Spanish, however, readily reject cases of preposed foci like (12), and to my ear, they are downright ungrammatical. In-situ foci do not appear to be fully ungrammatical in some cases, but they sound extremely unnatural and at this point I do not have any attested examples of this kind of construction. Given these complications, in what follows I only provide an analysis of presentational focus, whose behavior is more systematic.

Unless otherwise noted, from this point onwards I use the term "focus" to refer exclusively to presentational focus.

4.2.2 Subject Presentational Foci

I first address the most simple cases of subject focus, which correspond to those instances where the object of a transitive sentence is dropped. I will address the cases where the object is not dropped (examples (6-7)) once the basics of the analysis of topicalization are introduced in §4.3. Consider the felicity contrast in (13), which illustrates the requirement that foci be sentence final in Spanish.

 Quién compró los discos?

'Who bought the records?'

a. #[Una muchacha] FOC los compró.

b. Los compró [una muchacha] FOC.

A girl bought them.

The felicitous answer where the subject is in focus, (13b), does not follow the word order observed in transitive sentences in the unmarked case. In §3 I argued that fronting of an agent subject was the result of the need to satisfy the EPP, which in Spanish is prioritized over the marked structure that results from having an agent in final position. The preference for the subject in focus in (13b) does not follow the word order observed in transitive sentences in the unmarked case in §1, where the agent was in focus. The felicity contrast where the subject is in focus in (13b) does not follow the word order observed in transitive sentences in the unmarked case in §1, where the agent was in focus.

In this kind of analysis, though, the clitic is coreferential with a pro that satisfies the verb's selection and theta requirements (Jaeggli 1982) and this raises the question of whether pro could satisfy the EPP in this kind of subject inversion sentence. Up to this point I have not found any evidence confirming or disconfirming such a possibility, but it should be noted that subject inversion in general is not dependent on some other argument of the verb (null or overt) satisfying the EPP. This is most clearly observed in VOS sentences from Peninsular Spanish, where both the arguments of the transitive verb are realized overtly in the post-verbal field.

4.2.2 Subject Presentational Foci
Now, subject inversion in Spanish is often analyzed as an operation that results in a compromise between focus and intonation requirements. Under the assumption that foci need to be signaled with the nuclear accent (the most prominent accent in the sentence: Jackendoff 1972; Selkirk 1984, 1995, among many others), and under the assumption that this accent is necessarily clause final in Spanish (e.g. Ladd 1996), a subject in focus must appear in the clause final position to comply with the intonational prominence requirement on foci (Contreras 1976, Zubizarreta 1998, Gutiérrez-Bravo 2000a, Büring & Gutiérrez-Bravo 2001). In what follows, I adopt this general line of analysis.

Following Samek-Lodovic (1996), Costa (1998) and Grimshaw & Samek-Lodovici (1998), I assume that foci are specified as such in the input by the feature `[focus]`. I further assume that the requirement that foci be signaled with the nuclear accent corresponds to the FOCUS PROMINENCE constraint of Büring (2001) and Büring & Gutiérrez-Bravo (2001).

(14) FOCUS PROMINENCE (FP)

Focus is most prominent.

I take FOCUS PROMINENCE to be a constraint that regulates the correspondence between a `[focus]` feature in the input and a constituent signaled with the nuclear accent in the output. The FOCUS PROMINENCE constraint crucially interacts with the constraints that govern the formation of phonological phrases, as argued for in Truckenbrodt (1999), Büring (2001), Büring & Gutiérrez-Bravo (2001) and Szendröi (2001). For full details related to phonological phrasing and intonational prominence in Spanish, I refer the reader to the analysis in Büring & Gutiérrez-Bravo (2001). In what follows, it will be enough to note that in the case of Spanish, where the nuclear accent is sentence-final, FOCUS PROMINENCE is violated whenever there is a constituent in focus that is not in the final position within the clause.

With these considerations in mind, consider again the VS order in (13a), where the agent subject is in focus. These examples show that Mexican Spanish, like other dialects of Spanish, prioritizes the requirement that a constituent in focus be the agent subject in a clause. These examples show that Mexican Spanish, like other dialects of Spanish, prioritizes the requirement that presentational foci be the agent subject in a clause. These examples show that Mexican Spanish, like other dialects of Spanish, prioritizes the requirement that presentational foci be the agent subject in a clause.

Technically, this is a simplified version of FOCUS PROMINENCE. In cases where there is more than one constituent in focus in languages like German, this constraint is responsible for ensuring that all of the focal constituents receive some degree of intonational prominence through a pitch accent (all else being equal) even if only one of them can be signaled with the nuclear accent. See Büring (2001) for details.
intonationally prominent (and thus appear in the sentence final position where the nuclear accent falls) over the requirement to have the Pole position filled. To derive this result, it is only necessary to rank the FOCUS PROMINENCE constraint above EPP. The resulting analysis is shown in tableau (15), where (15b) emerges as the winner despite its violation of EPP. In (15) and the tableaux that follow, the constituent on which the nuclear accent falls is indicated in small caps.

This analysis is similar in its essentials to previous OT analyses of focus-driven subject inversion (Samek-Lodovici 1996; Costa 1996, 1998; Grimshaw and Samek-Lodovici 1998) which propose that a language displays subject inversion when the constraint on foci outranks the structural requirement on subjects (either the SUBJECT or the SUBJ CASE constraint). In this way, my proposal is compatible with the conclusion that these analyses arrive at. However, my analysis is different in two important respects.

What prevents a preverbal focussed subject (such as the subject in 15a) from satisfying FOCUS PROMINENCE by receiving the nuclear accent in-situ are higher-ranked prosodic constraints that ensure that the nuclear accent is sentence-final in Spanish. See Büring & Gutiérrez-Bravo (2001) for details.

First, in my OT analysis there is no direct link between word order and focus interpretation. As discussed originally in Gutiérrez-Bravo (2000a), the relevant effects are mediated by intonational considerations.

Secondly, my analysis does not resort to a subject condition, but rather to the interaction between the EPP and the markedness constraints in the Pole Hierarchy. This difference has no consequences in simple cases like (15), but its relevance begins to emerge once we consider more complex cases, such as sentence focus, which I analyze in the next subsection.

4.2.3 Sentence Focus

It is a well-known fact about Spanish and other subject-inversion languages that the word order perturbations observed when the subject is in focus are not possible in cases of sentence focus, that is, when every constituent in the clause is a focus (see Contreras 1976, Fant, 1984, to cite just a few references). This is illustrated by the contrast in felicity between SVO and OVS in (16). Recall that OVS is the typical realization in Mexican Spanish of clauses with the subject in focus, in focus when both the subject and the object are realised as lexical XPs (see §4.2.1).
In Costa's (1998) analysis of sentence focus in Portuguese it is proposed that the unmarked SVO order emerges as the optimal output in these cases because the subject-inversion candidate (VOS in Portuguese) incurs a violation of the subject condition that is not necessary to satisfy the constraint on foci. Costa (1998) relies on the ALIGNFOCUS constraint of Grimshaw & Samek-Lodovici (1996) that requires foci to be rightmost, and which is vacuously satisfied in cases of sentence focus. He observes that as a result of this, any order of the predicate and its arguments equally satisfies ALIGNFOCUS and so this constraint does not play any role in defining the optimal output. Since the effects of ALIGNFOCUS are neutralized in this case, other constraints determine the outcome. Concretely, in Costa's analysis the SUBJECTCASE constraint decides the outcome of the competition. This is shown in the tableau in (17), which summarizes the analysis in Costa (1998).

16 When the focus domain and the sentence coincide entirely, their right edges necessarily coincide. This result cannot be achieved with the original formulation of ALIGNFOCUS in Grimshaw & Samek-Lodovici (1996) and Samek-Lodovici (1996), so Costa (1998) suggests a redefinition of this constraint. I refer the reader to Costa's work for details.

Costa points out that in sentence focus contexts we see an instance of the emergence of the unmarked word order (see also Costa 2001). In other words, even though Portuguese displays numerous word order permutations as the result of being a discourse-configurational language, the unmarked word order, regulated in its entirety by syntactic constraints, emerges as the felicitous order in sentence focus contexts. In my analysis, I propose that the subject-inversion candidate (OVS in Portuguese) is ruled out in cases of sentence focus because the subject is marked by a pronoun or a definite article in the fronted position. Instead, I adopt the FOCUSROMINENCE constraint from Gutiérrez Bravo (2000a) and (2000b) for Spanish. This constraint regulates the correspondence between focus and pitch accent, and ensures that the focus bears the highest prominence in the sentence. In (18), I present the tableau of the competition between SVO and OVS in sentence focus contexts.
Recall that the definition of *Focus Prominence* is such that every focal element must be signaled with the nuclear accent. In cases of sentence focus the verb and both its arguments are all focal elements. Since the sentential accent can only signal one of these elements, cases of sentence focus will always bring with them violations of *Focus Prominence*, as suggested in Büring's (2001) analysis of German. In both (18a) and (18b), only the sentence-final constituent can satisfy *Focus Prominence*, and so each candidate incurs two violations of this constraint. The word order effects driven by the condition on foci are neutralized in this case, since word order perturbations can no longer prevent violations of *Focus Prominence*. As a result, the SVO candidate emerges as the winner because the OVS candidate incurs in a violation of *Pole/Theme* that does not improve the structure in any way.

In this way, my analysis is reminiscent of the analysis of word order in Spanish in Contreras (1976), who suggests that the contrast between (19a) and (19b) is an issue of the relative markedness of the constituent that occupies the Spec position.

Two further observations become relevant here. The first is that the EPP does not play a role in deciding the outcome either, since it is satisfied in both candidates, by the subject in (18a) and by the fronted object in (18b). And second, Economy of Structure and Movement do not play a role in deciding the outcome either. Since it is satisfied in both candidates, my analysis does not predict any preference between the two.

Recall that the definition of *Focus Prominence* is such that every focal element...
In Contreras' analysis, however, the relevant markedness distinction has to do with the Theme/Rheme dichotomy dating back to the Prague Circle tradition. In a nutshell, Contreras proposes a hierarchy where agents are more marked Rhemes (i.e. foci) than (semantic) themes or patients. Since Rhemes have to be aligned to the right edge of the clause in accordance with this hierarchy, the SVO word order corresponds to the one that is least marked with respect to the Rheme hierarchy, and so it is signaled as the unmarked order in this case.

There are two ways in which my analysis is different from the one in Contreras (1976), though. First, in my proposal the relevant distinction is a distinction made purely in terms of structural markedness. This kind of markedness is defined in part with respect to the Pole, but is ultimately better understood as a property of the clause as a whole. For instance, in the discussion of unaccusative verbs I argued that a clause with a theme as the Pole is more marked than a clause without a Pole. But there is nothing inherent about themes functioning as Poles that entails that this should be so.

It is the relative ranking of the EPP (a purely structural constraint) with respect to *Pole/Theme that defines the relative markedness of these two possible clauses and consequently defines the one that corresponds to the unmarked word order. Clearly enough, in a language that had the opposite ranking (i.e. EPP >> *Pole/Theme) a clause with a theme as the Pole would be less marked than a clause without a Pole.

The second way in which my proposal differs from Contreras' is that it rejects the hypothesis that discourse considerations such as Theme/Rheme play a role in defining unmarked word order (recall that in the analysis of unmarked word order that I developed in the preceding chapter constraints related to the discourse did not play any role). In departing from this hypothesis, I depart from its fundamental assumption, namely, that there is an inherent relation between certain semantic roles (i.e. agents) or grammatical relations (i.e. subjects) and certain pragmatic relations such as topic (or Theme, in Contreras 1976). This is an issue that has been much discussed in the literature on Spanish (and many other languages) with respect to the relation between subjects and topics, and so it is taken to be determined by the sentence as a whole (as opposed to the discourse as a whole, as is suggested by the approach developed in the preceding chapter). This kind of markedness is derived in part by appealing to the sentence as a whole, which provides a definition of the clause as a whole (as opposed to the discourse as a whole, as is suggested by the approach developed in the preceding chapter).
Topicalization

As in many other languages, topicalization results in perturbations of the basic word order of Spanish. We will see that these perturbations conflict with the scale of structural markedness (the Pole hierarchy) proposed in §3. Hence an adequate analysis of Spanish word order must include an account of topicalization. The account of the basic cases is fairly straightforward and provides further support for a definition of the EPP which appeals to the notion of the Pole. More complex are cases in which two constituents occur in the preverbal field. Here, the semantic role-sensitivity of the Pole, as embodied in the Pole Hierarchy, plays a crucial role in fixing their relative order.

Before addressing these issues, I will lay out my basic assumptions about topicalization. Topicalization remains one of the most obscure aspects of the syntax-pragmatics interface, and there is no agreement in the literature as to how to define sentence topics and how to characterize them formally.

Since it is not the purpose of this dissertation to address the semantic and pragmatic properties of sentence topics, my characterization of topicalization in Spanish is fairly basic and relies mostly on syntactic criteria to identify topical XPs.


I am greatly indebted to Donka Farkas for helpful discussion of the relevant issues in the paragraphs that follow.

By topicalization I mean the operation whereby a referential expression signaled as the sentence topic is displaced to a left-peripheral position. This is shown for a direct object in (19a) and for a temporal adverbial in (19b).

(19) a. El periódico lo compró Juan. (The newspaper, John bought it.)
b. Ayer compró Juan el periódico. (Yesterday Juan bought the newspaper.)

I assume that topicalization can fulfill either of two functions. In the first one, topicalization establishes a pragmatic relation of aboutness which holds between a referent and a proposition with respect to a particular context, such that a sentence topic is (broadly) the syntactic constituent which the proposition is about (Kuno 1972, Gundel 1974, Dik 1978, Reinhart 1982; see also Lambrecht 1994). The second function that sentence topics can have is to "limit the applicability of the main predication to a certain restricted domain... the topic sets a spatial, temporal or individual framework within which the main predication holds" (Chafe 1976:50).

In (19a) the left-peripheral XP 'the newspaper' is in an aboutness relation with the rest of the sentence, whereas in (19b) 'yesterday' anchors the rest of the sentence in a particular context such that a sentence topicalization establishes a pragmatic relation of aboutness which holds between a sentence topic and the rest of the sentence.

In what follows I do not consider hanging topics, which are topical expressions that are introduced by a locution such as 'with respect to...', 'as for...', etc., as in the English example in (i), and which behave differently from sentence topics in Spanish and other languages (see Zubizarreta 1999 for discussion and diagnostics).

(i) With respect to John, he has agreed to take responsibility over the project.
Despite their differences in function, these two kinds of topic are equally required to appear in a left-peripheral position. Furthermore, fronted topics of both kinds create islands for extraction (see Rochemont 1989; for Spanish, see Goodall 2001). This is shown in the examples below. The topic in (20a) corresponds to the direct object of the lower verb. In (20b) and (20c) it corresponds to a temporal and a locative expression, respectively. I adopt this syntactic test as the primary diagnostic for identifying sentence topics.

(20) a. ¿A quién crees que el premio se lo dieron?  
'Who do you think that the prize they gave to?'
(1989)

b. ¿Qué dices que ayer compró Juan?  
'What are you saying that yesterday Juan bought?'

The reader should also be aware that by using the term topicalization I am not claiming that this phenomenon in Spanish is equivalent in its pragmatic properties to English topicalization (vs. English left-dislocation). At this point, I do not know if Spanish topicalization can fulfill the different pragmatic functions of both English topicalization and left-dislocation, or rather if it corresponds to just one of them. See Casielles-Suárez (1995) for discussion of this issue in Catalan.
moment". As noted in Lambrecht (1994), active referential expressions are typically realized as unstressed pronouns or as zero or null forms, and so I take this formal encoding as the \textit{prima facie} diagnostic for discourse topics.

A further difference between sentence topics and discourse topics is relevant here. It has often been pointed out that discourse-topicality is a property that can extend across a (potentially very large) number of sentences. In contrast, sentence topicality is a relational property that topic constituents have by virtue of being in a particular relation (aboutness, anchoring) with other elements of the sentence, a relation that is usually signaled by word order (see especially Reinhart 1982, Vallduví 1992 and Lambrecht 1994).

In this respect, I assume that a fundamental difference between sentence and discourse topics is that a sentence topic cannot be realized by an unstressed or null form, and instead it must be realized as a full lexical XP (or as a stressed pronoun) in a left-peripheral position, in which I essentially follow the analysis of sentence topics in Vallduví (1992).

After these considerations, the characterization of sentence topics that we arrive at is that a sentence topic is a full lexical XP that is part of the common ground and which is displaced to a left-peripheral position from the position it would occupy in the unmarked case. The diagnostic that I resort to for identifying sentence topics relies on the fact that topics create islands for extraction. With this characterization of sentence topics in mind, we can turn to the interaction of topicalization with the EPP and with the markedness constraints in the Pole hierarchy.

Consider the examples first introduced in §4.1 as (1), and reproduced here as (21).

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textbf{a.} Ayer compró Juan el periódico. Adv V S O
\item \textbf{b.} El periódico lo compró Juan. O V S
\item \textbf{c.} Los chocolates le gustan a Juan. S V IO
\item \textbf{d.} Tu hermano llegó. S V
\end{enumerate}

"Yesterday Juan bought the newspaper."
"The newspaper, John bought it."
"Chocolate, Juan likes."
"Your brother arrived."

Fant (1984) made the striking observation that in Spanish (all else being equal), all that is required for a theme argument to qualify as a topic and be fronted to the preverbal position is that it appear in the previous discourse. Furthermore, in a left-ordered position, in which I essentially follow the proposal of Fant (1984), in the unmarked order and in the preverbal position, there is a significant difference between sentence topics and discourse topics. Sentence topics are termed \textit{Links} in Vallduví (1992).
under certain discourse conditions (whose precise characterization awaits future research) topicalization is obligatory in Spanish. Thus there is a robust contrast in felicity between (22a), where the unaccusative subject is fronted, and (22b), which corresponds to the unmarked word order.

(22) A: Estábamos esperando a que [llegara tu hermano] para ir a la fiesta pero no vamos a poder ir.

[We were waiting for your brother to arrive] so that we could go to the party, but we're not going to be able to go.'

B: Por qué?

A: a) Porque [tu hermano llegó], pero no trajo el coche.

[Because your brother arrived, but he didn't bring the car]

b) #Porque [llegó tu hermano], pero no trajo el coche.

Based on this observation, I assume in what follows that being discourse-old is a sufficient condition for an argument or adjunct to appear as a sentence topic. My proposed analysis for the examples in (21) is that in all cases the fronted topic corresponds to the pole of the clause ([Spec, I] in this case). This raises two separate issues with respect to my analysis of unmarked word order in §3. The first one is that in my analysis agents constitute the least marked instance of a pole, but in (21a-b) it is a different argument or adjunct that occupies the pole position. The second issue is that I suggested that themes are prevented from occupying the pole in the unmarked case because of the ranking *Pole/Theme >> EPP, but clearly this state of affairs does not hold of (21b-d). In what follows I argue that these issues can be resolved because of the following theorem: EPP, but despite this note of effacement, this is an important argument in favor of the claim that I suggested that themes are prevented from occupying the pole in the unmarked case in (21b-d). In my analysis against continuing the markedness increase of a pole, in (21b) it is assumed that the topic is an argument to the marked word order in §3. The issue is that in

Example (22) is my own. See Fant (1984) for similar contrasts in transitive constructions and psych predicates.

Having an instantiation in the previous discourse is a sufficient but not a necessary condition for topicalization. As discussed in the previous section, what characterizes the referent of a topic is that it is part of the common ground, and temporal expressions usually can be part of the common ground and function as topics even when they are not discourse-old. This is presumably because the speaker and the hearer share the assumption that an event necessarily involves a time at which it occurs.
I propose two modifications of Costa’s constraint, however. First, it seems to me that the clause of this constraint that states that non-topics cannot be topicalized can be independently captured by Economy of Structure and Economy of Movement considerations. In terms of my analysis, for example, unnecessary fronting of a non-topic will result in a higher degree of structural markedness than the one of a candidate that does not display gratuitous topicalization (this is an issue that will become clearer in the discussion that follows). Accordingly, I will leave this second clause of the constraint out. Second, I propose defining T \text{OPIC \text{FIRST}} as a gradient constraint. The purpose of this is to allow a topic to move as far to the left as possible, even when for some reason it cannot end up being the clause initial constituent. My proposed modification of T \text{OPIC \text{FIRST}} is as follows.

\begin{align*}
\text{(24) T \text{OPIC \text{FIRST}}} & \\
& \text{A topic is the initial constituent of a [+verbal] Extended Projection.}
\end{align*}

If XP is a topic, then XP c-commands every head Y and every maximal projection ZP in the Extended Projection, where Y is a head not contained by XP, and ZP is a maximal projection that neither contains nor is contained by XP.

- Violated once by every head Y or every ZP that c-commands a topic.

The crucial aspect of my analysis of topicalization in Spanish is that in the examples in (21), the fronted topics automatically satisfy the EPP constraint by virtue of moving into the Pole position to satisfy T \text{OPIC \text{FIRST}}. This is supported by the evidence from ellipsis discussed in §2, which indicates that topics and subjects occupy the same position in Spanish (Ordóñez & Treviño 1999). The relevant paradigm is repeated in (25).

\begin{align*}
\text{(25)} & \\
& \text{take the initial constituent of a [+verbal] Extended Projection.}
\end{align*}

I first exemplify my analysis of topicalization with the case that corresponds to the topicalized subject of an unaccusative predicate, since it corresponds to the simple case of topicalization. We have seen that in this case a subject theme appears in the preverbal position, contrary to what is observed in the unmarked case. Since topicalization overrides the unmarked word order, T \text{OPIC \text{FIRST}} must outrank *Pole/Theme in Spanish. The analysis of example (21d) is presented in tableau (26):

\begin{align*}
\text{(26) (=21d) I} & \\
& \begin{array}{|l|}
\hline
\text{INPUT:} & \begin{array}{l}
\text{arrive} (x), x=\text{your brother (Th), x=\text{[topic]}} \\
\hline
\text{TOPIC} & \text{FIRST} \\
\text{EPP} & \text{Pole/Theme} \\
\text{X} & \text{V}
\end{array}
\end{array}
\end{align*}

- \text{TOPIC FIRST} \\
- \text{EPP}

propose modification of \text{TOPIC FIRST} in follows.

I agree when no one reason is shown can no before the clause initial constituent. My

\begin{align*}
\text{EPP} & \\
& \text{arrive} (x), x=\text{your brother (Th), x=\text{[topic]}} \\
\text{TOPIC} & \text{FIRST} \\
\text{EPP} & \text{Pole/Theme} \\
\text{X} & \text{V}
\end{align*}

- \text{TOPIC FIRST} \\
- \text{EPP}

propose modification of \text{TOPIC FIRST} in follows.
Candidate (26b), which corresponds to the unmarked word order, loses because of its violation of TOPIC FIRST, since the verb c-commands the topic. Candidate (26a) wins despite its violation of *Pole/Theme, which would be fatal if the subject were not a topic. Notice that the winning candidate further satisfies the EPP by virtue of placing the subject in [Spec, I] in order to satisfy TOPIC FIRST. This is irrelevant for the evaluation of this particular example (since TOPIC FIRST is the constraint that decides the outcome of the competition) but the fact that fronted topics get to satisfy EPP as a side effect of complying with TOPIC FIRST will be crucial when we consider more complex cases later in this chapter and in the following one.

In Spanish constituents with any semantic role can appear as fronted topics in the preverbal position. Example (21a) and (21b) show a temporal expression and theme direct object functioning as a topic, respectively. Examples with locative XPs, and manner and reason adverbs are presented below.

(27) a. En este bar escribió Max su primera novela.  
    In this bar wrote Max his first novel  
    'In this bar, Max wrote his first novel.' (Zubizarreta 1998:101)

b. De esta manera concluyeron las negociaciones entre los dos partidos.  
    In this way finished the negotiations between the two parties  
    'In this way, the negotiations between the two parties came to an end.'

c. Por eso no ha terminado Luis la carrera.  
    For that not has finished Luis the college degree  
    'Because of that, Luis hasn't finished his college degree.'

Gloss and free translation are my own.

Under the assumption that all of these topics occupy the same position, the data in (27) indicates that TOPIC FIRST outranks the whole of the Pole Hierarchy. This is because, all else being equal, an XP is not excluded from the Pole position when it corresponds to a topic, irrespective of its semantic role. The ranking of the relevant constraints so far is thus the one in (28).

(28) TOPIC FIRST >> *Pole/Reason >> ... >> *Pole/Theme >> EPP >> *Pole/Experiencer >> *Pole/Agent.

4.3.2 Vacuous Structure

The analysis in (26) assumes that if a topic gets fronted, it lands in the Pole specifier, and we have seen evidence from ellipsis that this is correct. However, it is clear that GEN can generate other structures where a topic is found in a position other than the one we have assumed. The correct analysis is one where the subject in (27a) moves to Spec, IP.

In Spanish constructions with any semantic role can appear in fronted topics in the more complex cases later in the chapter and in the following one.

EPP is a side effect of compatibility with TOPIC FIRST and will be crucial when we consider the evaluation of the preverbal example (since TOPIC FIRST is the constraint that places the subject in Spec, I) in order to satisfy TOPIC FIRST. This is instead the point where the EPP is violated by virtue of the preverbal position of TOPIC FIRST, since the verb c-commands the topic. Candidate (26b), which corresponds to the unmarked word order, loses because of
A candidate like (29a) adjoins the topic to IP, so TOPIC FIRST is satisfied, but it leaves the specifier of IP empty, so there is no violation of *Pole/Theme.

A candidate like (29b) also satisfies TOPIC FIRST and avoids a violation of *Pole/Theme by projecting an extra XP with a null head above IP to host the topic in its specifier.

Candidate (29c) is just like (29b), the only difference is that in this case the verb in IP further moves to the head position of XP. Since these candidates only violate EPP, which is ranked below *Pole/Theme, one of them would emerge as the winner under our current set of constraints. As surface strings the candidates in (29) are no different from the winning candidate (26a), but it is still necessary to distinguish them. As I will show later in this chapter and in the following one, candidates where topics are adjoined to IP, as in (29a), or where an extra XP is projected above IP, as in (29b) (but not as in 29c) can in fact emerge as winners in more complex clauses. However, this is not the typical situation, as the evidence from ellipsis indicates. This makes it necessary to rule out the candidates in (29), where the topic does not occupy the same position that a preverbal transitive subject would occupy in the unmarked case. For this purpose I propose the constraints against vacuous structure below (see also Grimshaw 1993; 1997 and Legendre et.al. 1995), which I suggest belong to the family of constraints that regulate Economy of Structure.

Contreras (1991) proposes that topicalization involves precisely this structure in Spanish. Recall from the definition in §2.2.2 that the specifier of such a phrase (whether a recursion of IP or a fully vacuous XP) does not correspond to the Pole.

The definition of *ADJUNCTION is straightforward. The reason for proposing the *VACUOUS-XP constraint requires some discussion. Recall that in §2.1.2 I introduced the concept of vacuous XP. There I suggested that this is an XP that has no inherent features of its own, whether because the features of its head are exactly those of the phrase that is immediately subjacent to XP (i.e., IP recursion) or because its head lacks features altogether (other than the {F} value that it has simply for being part of the Extended Projection). *VACUOUS-XP is precisely the constraint that penalizes such a structure, and as such it is closely related to the MINIMAL PROJECTION constraint of Grimshaw (1997). However, this is not the general picture. The vacuous XP in recurrences of verbs, for example, is clearly adjoined and hence licensed. The reason for wanting to penalize the vacuous XP is not clear.

Grimshaw (1997) abandons the MINIMAL PROJECTION constraint, claiming that its effects with respect to Economy of Structure can be captured independently by the STAY and Ob-HD constraints. Although this is true in a great many cases, independent violations of the STAY and Ob-HD constraints are not enough to rule out a candidate that does not abide by Economy of Structure when such a candidate satisfies a markedness constraint that outranks both STAY and Ob-HD. This is arguably the case in Spanish, where the relevant markedness constraint can be taken to be *Pole/Theme. We know that *Pole/Theme outranks STAY because *Pole/Theme outranks EPP and EPP in turn outranks STAY (§3.3.1). Evidence from wh-interrogatives, to be presented in the following chapter (§5.4., fn 36; see also Appendix A) further indicates that Ob-HD is fairly low-ranked in this language, possibly even outranked by STAY. As a result, a candidate that projects a vacuous XP to prevent a them from landing in the Pole position indeed violates either Ob-HD (example 29b) or incurs an extra violation of STAY because of verb movement from IO to X0 (example 29c), yet it will still win, because in either case
My conception of *VACUOUS-XP differs from Grimshaw's MINIMAL PROJECTION in one important respect, though. Ultimately, *VACUOUS-XP is best conceived as a constraint that penalizes a DEPENDENCY violation (McCarthy & Prince 1995), and not just an Economy of Structure violation. This is because candidates that project an XP with a "dummy" head (either null or overt) are including a head in the output that does not have any corresponding element in the input. In other words, projecting any phrase (whether vacuous or contentful) will result in a number of violations of the constraints that regulate Economy of Structure (see Grimshaw 1997, 2001). But projecting a vacuous XP further carries with it a DEPENDENCY violation. It is this kind of violation that *VACUOUS-XP specifically targets. Given that projecting a vacuous XP brings with it a DEPENDENCY violation, I further assume as a working hypothesis that universally *VACUOUS-XP outranks *ADJUNCTION.

I also assume that *VACUOUS-XP is violated irrespective of whether the head of the vacuous XP remains null, as in (29b), or whether it is filled by movement of a contentful head, as in (29c). Candidates like (29b) and (29c) are different in that the former violates the OBLIGATORY HEAD (Ob-HD) constraint of Grimshaw (1997), whereas the latter does not. Yet they both violate *VACUOUS-XP because they case it avoids a violation of the higher ranked *Pole/Theme. In other words, this is a case where the projection of extra structure is not entirely gratuitous, and so it cannot be ruled out independently by STAY and Ob-HD. This is where a constraint like MINIMAL PROJECTION or *VACUOUS-XP becomes necessary.

For the time being we have no evidence for the relative ranking of TOPIC FIRST with respect to either *ADJUNCTION or *VACUOUS-XP; any ranking of these three constraint will give the right result since the winning candidate satisfies them all.

Table: Constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constraint</th>
<th>Violation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*VACUOUS-XP</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td>(29b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*ADJUNCTION</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td>(29c)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the time being we have no evidence for the relative ranking of TOPIC FIRST with respect to either *ADJUNCTION or *VACUOUS-XP. Any ranking of these three constraint will give the right result since the winning candidate satisfies them all.

The fact that (29b) violates Ob-HD but (29c) does not have any effect in the analysis that follows, since Ob-HD is a fairly low-ranked constraint in Spanish. 3 3
4.3.3 Topic and Focus

At this point, we can return to the OVS examples introduced in the section on focus. Recall that in *Mexican Spanish* OVS corresponds to the order observed in clauses where the subject is in focus, and where both the subject and the object are realized as lexical XPs.

(32) Quién compró los discos?

`Who bought the records?`

a.  #[Una muchacha] FOC compró los discos.

S V O

a  girl bought the records

b.  Los discos los compró [ una muchacha] FOC.

O V S

the records ACC-CL bought  a girl

I suggest that (32b) involves both focalization of the subject and topicalization of the direct object. Notice that the fronted object in (32b) has an instantiation in the previous discourse (i.e., in the wh-question) and so it meets the sufficient condition required for it to appear as a sentence topic.

In terms of my analysis, the object DP is fronted to the Pole position to satisfy TOPIC FIRST. The subject DP in focus, on the other hand, remains in its VP-internal position, [Spec, V]. After V-to-I movement the subject corresponds to the sentence final constituent, so it receives the nuclear accent and FOCUS PROMINENCE is satisfied. This analysis is presented in (33). At present I have no clear evidence for the relative ranking of FOCUS PROMINENCE with respect to TOPIC FIRST and *Pole/Theme but this bears no consequences for the data under consideration, since the winning candidate does not violate either.

(33) OVS clauses; subject focus, object topic.

INPU T: <buy (x, y), x=a girl (Ag), x=[focus], y=the records (Th), y=[topic]>


SVO


OVS
We have seen how the requirements of TOPICFIRST can make an unaccusative subject or a direct object surface in the Pole, contrary to what is observed in the unmarked case. In this analysis, the EPP is satisfied as an indirect consequence of topicalization. One further observation is important at this point. In unaccusative sentences the theme subject is the only argument of the verb, and in OVS sentences with subject focus there is an independent condition that prevents the subject from surfacing as the Pole, namely, the requirement that it appear in the sentence-final position in order to satisfy FOCUS PROMINENCE. However, the analysis also accounts for cases where an agent subject could in principle surface as the Pole, but where in fact it does not, because another topical XP has already satisfied the EPP, making movement of the agent subject to [Spec, I] unnecessary. This can be seen in the Adv VSO sentence (34).

(34) Ayer compró Juan el periódico. Adv V S O
'yesterday bought Juan the newspaper'

The analysis I propose for this sentence is one where the fronted adverbial corresponds to the topic, and the rest of the sentence corresponds to the focus. This is in accordance with the characterization in Zubizarreta (1998) of XP-VSO sentences in Spanish as topic-comment structures. The crucial question that we need to address is what prevents the subject from surfacing in its canonical preverbal position in topic-comment sentences like (34). Satisfaction of FOCUS PROMINENCE is not an issue here. Given that the focus domain is formed by the subject, the verb, and the topical temporal adverb, the subject is not a constituent of the focus domain. Therefore, the subject cannot violate the EPP by moving to [Spec, I], which is where the focused adverbial moves.
Instead the EPP is satisfied by the subject agent, which, as mentioned, constitutes the least marked instance of a Pole. But the resulting violation of *VACUOUS XP proves fatal in my proposed constraint ranking of Spanish. The situation with candidate (36c) is in essence the same, with the exception that instead of projecting a vacuous XP, this candidate adjoins the topic to IP, and so it is ruled out because of its violation of *ADJUNCTION. In this way, candidate (36a) emerges as the optimal realization of the topic-comment input.

35

(36) 'Yesterday Juan bought the newspaper'; Topic=ayer

\[\text{INPUT: } \langle\text{buy (x, y; z), buy=[focus], x=Juan (Ag), x=[focus], y=the newspaper (Th), y=[focus]; z=yesterday (Temp), z=[topic]\rangle}\]

\[\text{TOPIC FIRST} \]

*VAC XP *ADJ Pole/Temp EPP

a. [IP [ayer] Top compró [VP Juan el periódico]]. Adv-VSO

b. [XP [ayer] Top Ø [IP Juan compró [VP el periódico]]]. Adv-SVO

c. [IP [ayer] Top [IP Juan compró [VP el periódico]]]. Adv-SVO

We are now in a position where we can address one of the central empirical observations of this dissertation, the fact that VSO clauses with an empty preverbal position are not tolerated in Mexican Spanish. A relevant paradigm reflecting this state of affairs is presented in (37) below. Following the discussion of adverbial expressions and word order in §2.1.1, I assume that ayer 'yesterday' in (37a) and Spanish does allow for Adv-SVO sentences like the losing candidates (36b,c), of course, but my claim is that in these cases the subject is also a topic. In contrast to what is observed in Adv-VSO sentences, if both the subject and the adverb are topics, they both have to be fronted to the left periphery to satisfy TOPIC FIRST. This issue is discussed in detail in §4.3.5.

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\[\text{(37a) } \text{Juan compró ayer el periódico. S V Adv O}\]

Juan bought yesterday the newspaper

\[\text{Juan bought the newspaper yesterday.'}\]

\[\text{(37b) } \text{Ayer compró Juan el periódico. Adv VSO}\]

\[\text{yesterday bought Juan the newspaper}\]

\[\text{Yesterday John bought the newspaper.'}\]

\[\text{(37c) } \text{*Compró ayer Juan el periódico. V Adv SO}\]

\[\text{bought yesterday Juan the newspaper}\]

\[\text{In the current analysis the unacceptability of (37c) is explained by the fact that it is generated at the left edge of VP and V-to-I movement derives the order in which the verb precedes the adverb (Pollock 1989). For (37b) I assume that the subject moves from its position in SPICE. I (37c) can be base-generated at the left edge of VP and V-to-I movement derives the subject agent.}\]
The interaction between topicalization and negation can be found in Mexican Spanish, where a sentence is judged as ungrammatical if it does not correspond to the some input under the constraints ranking of the interaction. In a context where a ungrammatical surface form is an inflectional surface does emerge as an optimal output for the sentence in (47). The reason for this result is the difference between initiality and contract with (37c). If in this case the location word order in case of sentence focus, as the SV-O candidate that leaves the Pole position empty does not emerge as a winner in either (38) or (39), and in this way (37c) is accounted for. In contrast, the V-Adv-SO candidate that places the Pole position empty does not emerge as a winner in either (38) or (39), and in this way (37c) is accounted for. In other words, given the ranking of constraints in Mexican Spanish, there is no input sentence that is grammatical.

Consider now an input where the adverb is the topic of the sentence, as in the analysis of (37b) in (36). As shown in tableau (39), the optimal candidate in this case is the one where the temporal adverb surfaces as the Pole in order to satisfy TOPICFIRST. The other two candidates, where the adverb is not the clause-initial element, lose because of their violations of TOPICFIRST.

Crucially, the V-Adv-SO candidate that leaves the Pole position empty does not emerge as a winner in either (38) or (39), and in this way (37c) is accounted for. In other words, given the ranking of constraints in Mexican Spanish, there is no input sentence that is grammatical.

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candidate that the constraint ranking selects as the winner for the input defined by this context.

This analysis achieves two things. First, it dispels the potential criticism that comparing infelicitous and ungrammatical sentences as part of the same candidate set involves comparing two completely different sets of phenomena governed by different grammatical principles. Second, it is no longer necessary to claim (for theory-internal reasons) that all losing candidates correspond to ungrammatical sentences, which involves claiming that, for instance, the SVO sentence in (40a) is ungrammatical in a subject-focus context (cf. Grimshaw & Samek-Lodovici 1998).

4.3.4 Presentational sentences

The discussion so far raises the question of what the analysis should be of VSO sentences in those varieties of Spanish that do allow for them. Here I cannot provide a detailed analysis of these varieties, but some tentative observations can be made at this point. Niño (1993a, 1993b) suggests that VSO sentences in Spanish are presentational in nature. An example is presented below (presumably from Venezuelan Spanish).

(41) Cazaron los hombres un ciervo.

'Vector' (1993:2)

This is consistent with the proposal in Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (1998) that VSO sentences in Spanish and Greek are closely related to Transitive Expletive Constructions in some Germanic languages.

Niño notes that (41) has a reading where the proposition is described as an activity, very much in character with a presentational function.

Niño (1993a) further observes that many instances where VSO sentences are slightly deviant are improved when a topical temporal adverb appears in the preverbal position, a pattern reminiscent of Mexican Spanish.

Following Diesing (1990), Niño takes this position to be the position also occupied by fronted subjects, namely [Spec, I]. The basis of Niño's (1993a) analysis is to claim that there are discourse conditions that allow a VSO sentence to "stand on its own" without the need to project [Spec, I]. Niño (1993b) proposes that these are the discourse conditions that require a presentational sentence. But those clauses that are not signaled as presentational require an element in [Spec, I], the subject in the unmarked case, or a temporal adverb functioning as a topic.

I suggest that the OT proposal I have developed is compatible with Niño's analysis. Assume that the presentational nature of a proposition is expressed in the input by a feature [thetic], and that the correspondence between this feature in the input and the output representation is governed by the constraint ranking. In this context, the candidate ranking selects as the winner for the input defined by this feature the candidate with the appropriate output representation.

It has also been noted in the literature that in VSO sentences the subject can sometimes be in focus. Niño (1993b), however, argues convincingly that focusing of the subject is not the primary function of this kind of sentence, a conclusion also arrived at in Zubizarreta (1998). Putting the analyses of these two authors together, it seems to me that these cases are instances of presentational sentences where the subject is a contrastive focus accentuated in-situ in its VP-internal position (see §4.2.1).

Niño (1993a) notes that in the variety of Spanish she considers only fronted temporal adverbs can fulfill this function, which is not what is observed in Mexican Spanish, though.
A [+verbal] extended projection is thetic iff its highest inflectional element c-commands all of the arguments of the lexical head of the extended projection.

As such, this is a purely descriptive constraint, and it should presumably be derived by more subtle semantic considerations. However, it will suffice for illustrating the point at hand. The variety of Spanish described in Niño (1993a, b) can now be characterized by having the ranking \text{T\textit{HET-C\textit{ON}} \gg \text{EPP}}. In other words, when the input bears the feature \text{thetic}, the optimal output corresponds to a VSO sentence, which violates the EPP because it lacks a Pole altogether, but satisfies \text{T\textit{HET-C\textit{ON}}} because the verb in I\textsubscript{0} (asymmetrically) c-commands all of its arguments. However, when the input does not bear this feature, then the effects of \text{T\textit{HET-C\textit{ON}}} are neutralized, and the EPP once again plays a crucial role. The Pole must now be filled, either by the subject or by a fronted topic, and in this case the variety of Spanish in Niño (1993a, b) behaves similarly to Mexican Spanish.

On the other hand, Mexican Spanish would be characterized by the opposite ranking, \text{EPP \gg \text{T\textit{HET-C\textit{ON}}}}.

Given this ranking, the optimal candidate will be one that has a fronted XP as a Pole, even if this means that the condition on presentational sentences is violated. This is illustrated for the simple transitive sentence (41) in the tableau in (43). In the input \text{[T]} stands for the abbreviation of the feature \text{thetic}.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Input: \langle \text{T, hunt (x, y), x=the men (Ag), y=a deer (Th)\rangle} & Output: \langle \text{VSO}\rangle & \text{T\textit{HET-C\textit{ON}}} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Notice that candidate (43a) violates \text{T\textit{HET-C\textit{ON}}} because the subject in \text{Spec, I} c-commands the verb in I\textsubscript{0}.

In other words, by prioritizing the satisfaction of the EPP, transitive clauses in Mexican Spanish can in a sense be unfaithful to the semantic specification of an input as \text{thetic}. Ultimately, my sense is that this phenomenon is best conceived as an instance of neutralization, as understood in phonology (see also Legendre et. al. 1998, and McCarthy 2002). In the same way that a feature distinction present in underlying segments can be neutralized in the surface representation, the ranking of constraints in Mexican Spanish is such that it neutralizes two different inputs, \langle \text{V (x, y)} \rangle and \langle \text{[T, V (x, y)]}\rangle, into the same surface representation, SVO.

Notice that this result can be achieved because the EPP in an OT analysis is not the subject of any formal role, and in this sense the variety of Spanish in Mexican Spanish is essentially similar to the variety of Spanish in VSO varieties of Spanish. However, the current analysis thus avoids the problem of ineffability, in a way similar to the one proposed in Legendre et. al. (1998). It is not the case that a presentational input with a transitive predicate in Mexican Spanish has no output. Rather, given the ranking of constraints of Mexican Spanish, the output of such an input is not distinct from the output of a simple transitive input.
transitive sentence does not have a presentational reading (i.e., in the SVO unmarked order and XP-VSO topic-comment sentences).

4.3.5 VOS sentences

At this point we can provide an analysis of the VOS sentences first introduced in §4.2.1. As already noted, VOS sentences can only have an interpretation where the subject is the only constituent in focus. Furthermore, such sentences are not tolerated in Mexican Spanish. In providing an account of these sentences, I follow the analysis in Ordóñez (1998), where their surface word order is derived by scrambling of the direct object, as in the example in (44), originally from Torrego (1984). I also follow the analysis in Zubizarreta (1998), where this scrambling operation is driven by the need to make the subject in focus the clause-final constituent, in order for it to be signaled by the nuclear accent.

(44) [IP Contestó [VP la pregunta i [VP Juan t i]]] V O S

answered the question Juan

My suggestion is that VOS sentences in Peninsular and other varieties of Spanish are presentational sentences (as defined in the previous section) where the subject is in focus. The direct object scrambles to allow the subject to appear in the clause-final position, but it remains in a position where it can be c-commanded by the verb in I. Further notice that scrambling of the direct object in (44) results in adjunction, and that *A DJUNCTION outranks both the EPP and all of the constraints in the Pole Hierarchy. The relevant ranking is repeated in (45).

(45) TOPIC FIRST, *VACUOUS XP >> *A DJUNCTION >> *Pole/Reason >> ... >> *Pole/Theme >> EPP >> *Pole/Experiencer >> *Pole/Agent.

Under this ranking, VOS does not emerge as the winning candidate for a thetic input with the subject in focus, as shown in tableau (46). Since the subject is in focus, the direct object has to move from its base position to allow the subject to be clause-final. The VOS candidate (46a) achieves this by scrambling the direct object, while the OVS candidate (46b) moves the direct object into the Pole instead. However, the violation of A DJUNCTION in the OVS candidate means that the direct object moves into a projection where it is not c-commanded by the verb. This violation proves fatal when compared with the OVS candidate, even though the OVS candidate satisfies THET-CON and thus is conformant. Even though the OVS candidate satisfies THET-CON and thus is conformant, when compared with the violation of A DJUNCTION in the OVS candidate, the OVS candidate successfully avoids the violation.

In the current analysis accounts for the absence of VOS sentences in Mexican Spanish without the need of any extra machinery. The relevant ranking is repeated in (45). The current analysis accounts for the absence of VOS sentences in Mexican Spanish without the need of any extra machinery. The relevant ranking is repeated in (45).
The structure and gloss of the winning candidate is presented in (47).

(46) MEXICAN SPANISH: Theoretic input of a transitive predicate with subject in focus.

\[
\text{INPUT: } [\text{T H} \text{ answer (x, y), x=Juan (Ag), x= [focus], y=the question (Th)}]^
\]

\[
\text{CONCLUSION: } \text{Juan answered the question.''}
\]

Notice that this is a case where the direct object occupies the Pole position even though it is not specified as a topic in the input. Notice that this indicates that Theme outranks *Adjunction in Peninsular Spanish. Otherwise the VOS candidate in this variety would lose in the same way that it does in Mexican Spanish.

This indicates that topicalization is not the only factor that makes a constituent surface as the Pole that would not do so in the unmarked work order. This is an issue that should be addressed in future research.

4.3.6 Default Topics

I now consider an alternative to the analysis of unmarked word order developed in §3, which emerges from the discussion of topicalization. I have argued that different kinds of XPs can appear in the Pole and satisfy the EPP by virtue of being topics. Yet this raises the question of whether this could be the factor that derives unmarked word order in the first place. That is, we need to consider if subjects in the unmarked SVO order might surface in the preverbal position because they are "default" topics instead.

Empirically, we have seen in §3.4 that the thematic roles of subjects in Spanish are best analyzed in terms of their thematic roles in the thematic roles...

§4.3.3. The glosses of (48a-b) are partially my own. Here I will not attempt to provide an analysis of the contrast in (48), since such an analysis would require a detailed OT characterization of island effects. Instead, I now consider an alternative to the model of unmarked word order developed in the previous section. The model of unmarked word order considers that the thematic roles of subjects in Spanish are best analyzed in terms of their thematic roles in the thematic roles...

4.3.6 Default Topics
Providing a formal characterization of the notion of default topic is equally (if not more) problematic. Claiming that a subject corresponds to the default topic amounts to assigning a specific pragmatic property to a specific grammatical relation. In both Minimalist and OT analyses this ultimately amounts to saying that the subject bears the feature \[\text{topic}\] by virtue of its grammatical relation. But if this is so, then we need some mechanism to remove this feature when the subject is clearly not functioning as a topic, as in the subject inversion cases we have discussed throughout this chapter.

Furthermore, such a mechanism would face serious problems in accounting for cases of sentence focus. The standard assumption in these cases is that every element in the clause is focal, including the subject, so this would also be a case where the subject’s default \[\text{topic}\] feature would have to be removed. But, crucially, the subject still appears in the preverbal position in cases of sentence focus (see §4.2.3), which disconfirms the hypothesis that its movement to the preverbal position is dependent on having a feature \[\text{topic}\] in the default case.

Even assuming that such a feature removal mechanism could be developed and defined in some coherent way, the resulting analysis would still make the wrong predictions with respect to word order. Concretely, if subjects bear a default \[\text{topic}\] feature and if they appear in the preverbal position in transitive clauses as a result of bearing this feature, then it goes unexplained why in psych predicates it is the dative experiencer and not the subject that appears in the preverbal position in the unmarked case. Notice that even if we assign the default \[\text{topic}\] feature not to the subject, but to the argument of the verb that ranks highest in the thematic hierarchy, we still get the wrong result. This is because the theme argument of unaccusative sentences and impersonal passives would still be assigned this default feature (since there are no agent or experiencer arguments in this case) and so would the subject. Furthermore, this analysis is also unable to account for the fact that in some languages and in some contexts the subject appears in the preverbal position in unaccusative and impersonal contexts, which is not predicted by the default \[\text{topic}\] hypothesis. This indicates that some more general phenomenon of head movement to an A-bar position in Spanish. But this is also true of the English (or any other Romance) subject. The standard assumption in these cases is that the subject bears the feature \[\text{topic}\] after the finite verb. However, OT analysis makes it necessary to account for the fact that the subject of an impersonal or unaccusative sentence appears in the preverbal position.

In my analysis, where the unmarked word order is derived in a way that is entirely independent of topicalization, this problem is avoided. Furthermore, just like the default topic analysis, my analysis is compatible with the evidence that the position occupied by preverbal subjects is an A-Bar position in Spanish. This is because, as discussed in §6, movement of a preverbal subject is predicted in cases where the subject is the dative experiencer of the verb, its argument is compatible with the evidence that the subject in these cases occupies different structural positions in the clause. This provides a principled account of why preverbal subjects occupy different positions in Spanish, and it also provides a principled account of why preverbal subjects do not occupy the same positions in Romance languages.
4.3.7 Multiple Topics

To conclude this chapter, I show how the analysis of topicalization accounts for cases where there is more than one sentence topic. Spanish readily allows for clauses with multiple topics, as is well known. Some examples are presented below.

(49) a. Esta carta el criado la trajo para mí.  
   'This letter the servant brought for me.' (Contreras 1976)

b. En este bar, Max escribió su primera novela.  
   'In this bar, Max wrote his first novel.' (Zubizarreta 1998:102)

c. Ayer a María la vieron con su novio.  
   'Yesterday they saw Mary with her boyfriend.' (Hernanz & Brucart 1987:82)

In sentences like (49a) and (49b) one of the fronted topics corresponds to the subject, but this is not a necessary requirement, as shown in (49c), where the fronted topics correspond to a temporal adverb and the direct object. Notice that in (49) we observe a situation different from the one in topic-comment sentences that have a single topic. This means that the grammatical justification for having a multiple topic is not a case where extra structure is projected to accommodate the multiple topics. This means that Spanish prioritizes the requirement to have topics in a leftmost position over complying with Economy of Structure. In terms of my analysis, this means that T\text{OPIC first} must outrank at least one of the NO\text{VACUOUS STRUCTURE} constraints in (30). Consequently, in principle there are two possible analyses of the examples in (49). In one analysis, one of the topics surfaces in the Pole and the leftmost topic is adjoined to IP (which violates *ADJUNCTION). In the other, one of the topics also surfaces in the Pole, but the leftmost topic is adjoined to a vacuous XP projected to host the topic (which violates *VACUOUS-XP). These two alternatives are presented for (49c) in (50).

(50) a. \[\text{IP Ayer [IP a María la vieron [VP con su novio]]].}\]  
   'Yesterday they saw Mary with her boyfriend.'

b. \[\text{XP Ayer [Ø [IP a María la vieron [VP con su novio]]]].}\]  
   'Yesterday they saw Mary with her boyfriend.'

However, given our working hypothesis that *VACUOUS-XP outranks *ADJUNCTION (§4.3.1), the adjunction structure in (50a) will surface as the winner irrespective of whether T\text{OPIC first} or just *VACUOUS outranks *ADJUNCTION. This is shown in tableau (51), where it can be seen that the reverse ranking of *VACUOUS-XP and T\text{OPIC first} gives the same result.

Recall that I assume that Spanish does not allow for multiple specifiers (§1.2.2). Consequently, I do not consider such an option for the cases at hand.
Let us go through the candidates in (51) one by one. Notice that violations of Topic First are unavoidable when more than one topic is involved: even if both topics appear in a left-peripheral position, as in (51a) and (51b), the topic in the Pole is c-commanded by the leftmost topic, which results in one violation of Topic First (recall that Topic First is violated once for every XP or X0 that c-commands a topic).

However, my gradient definition of Topic First still makes each topic move as much as possible to the left periphery to avoid even more violations of this constraint. This is most clearly observed in candidates (51c) and (51d). These candidates have one topic in the Pole, but leave the other one in its VP-internal position. The result is that neither of these candidates violates *VACUOUS XP nor *ADJUNCTION.

But by doing so they incur in an extra violation of Topic First. This is because in these two candidates (as opposed to 51a and 51b) both the topic in [Spec, I] and the verb in I c-command the topic. The extra violation of Topic First proves fatal and so (51b) loses to (51a).

More generally, they comply better with Economy of Structure than the attested output. Since the data under consideration does not allow us to determine what the strict ranking between *VACUOUS XP and Topic First (as much as possible to the left periphery) is, I will leave these constraints unranked with respect to one another. The full ranking of the constraints relevant to topicalization thus corresponds to (52).

(52) *VACUOUS XP, Topic First >> *ADJUNCTION >> *Pole/Reason >> *Pole/Manner-Temporal >> *Pole/Locative >> *Pole/Theme >> EPP >> *Pole/Experiencer >> *Pole/Agent.
As such, (51) provides the basic analysis of multiple topicalization. There is, however, one more important property of multiple topic constructions that has not been observed in the literature (to the best of my knowledge), namely, that the relative order of the multiple topics is not entirely free. By and large, examples of multiple topicalization in the literature follow a pattern where the innermost topic (i.e., the one immediately to the left of the verb) is the one that ranks higher in the Thematic Hierarchy (§3.2.1). The examples in (49) all show this pattern. In (49a) and (49b) the two topics are a theme and agent, and a locative and an agent, respectively. In both cases the agent is the innermost topic. Notice again that this pattern is not dependent on the presence of a subject or an agent. In (50) (a) the two topics are a temporal and a theme. As such, the agent is the innermost topic and the temporal is the outermost topic. In (50b) the two topics are a theme and an experiencer of a psych verb, respectively. In both cases the agent is the innermost topic. Notice that the agent is not dependent on the presence of a subject or an experiencer. In (51) the two topics are a theme and a temporal. In both cases the agent is the innermost topic and the temporal is the outermost topic. In (52) the two topics are a theme and a locative. In both cases the agent is the innermost topic and the locative is the outermost topic. It should be pointed out that most of the (b) examples in (53-56) are simply infelicitous, rather than ungrammatical. Although at this point I cannot characterize the pragmatic and discourse properties that license them, they can be readily found in spoken and written texts. As such, it appears that the pattern where the innermost topic is the one immediately to the left of the verb is a general principle in the literature. However, the relative order of the topics can be affected by the presence of a subject or an agent. In such cases, the subject or agent is the innermost topic. More research is needed to clarify this issue, which I will leave open for the time being.

It should be pointed out that the pattern where the innermost topic is the one immediately to the left of the verb is not dependent on the presence of a subject or an experiencer. In (53) the two topics are a theme and an experiencer of a psych verb, respectively. In both cases the agent is the innermost topic. Notice that the agent is not dependent on the presence of a subject or an experiencer. In (54) the two topics are a theme and a temporal. In both cases the agent is the innermost topic and the temporal is the outermost topic. In (55) the two topics are a theme and a locative. In both cases the agent is the innermost topic and the locative is the outermost topic. In (56) the two topics are a theme and a manner adverbial. In both cases the agent is the innermost topic and the manner adverbial is the outermost topic. Henceforth I break up the constraint *Pole/Manner-Temporal into *Pole/Manner and *Pole/Temporal, with the former outranking the latter.
topic ranks higher in the thematic hierarchy simply corresponds to the unmarked (or least marked) pattern of multiple topicalization. Impressionistically, it seems to me that the opposite pattern (where the innermost topic ranks lower in the thematic hierarchy) necessarily gives the innermost topic a contrastive reading (see Lambrecht 1994 and Büring 1999 for the notion of contrastive topic). In contrast, in the unmarked pattern the innermost topic can but need not have a contrastive reading. Settling this issue goes beyond the scope of this dissertation. What we need at this point is to define some diagnostic for the unmarked multiple topicalization pattern observed in the (a) examples in (53-56) that neutralizes the pragmatic conditions under which the opposite pattern is licensed. I suggest that contrastive verb or adverb focus provides such a diagnostic.

We have seen in (§4.2) that contrastive foci mostly appear in the sentence final position in Mexican Spanish, in which their behavior is akin to that of presentational foci. Consider now a case of contrastive verb or adverb focus, where the clause under consideration has two XPs that function as either arguments or adjuncts of the verb. Focus prominence requires that the verb or adverb in focus appear in the sentence final position. If the two XP arguments or adjuncts have an instantiation in the previous discourse, they meet the sufficient condition to function as sentence topics. FOCUS PROMINENCE can be satisfied by fronting these XPs to the left periphery, after which the verb or adverb corresponds to the sentence-final (see §4.3) and focus PROMINENCE can be ascribed by function alone. Thus, to the previous discourse, they meet the sufficient condition to function as sentence topics. If the two XP arguments or adjuncts have an instantiation in the previous discourse, they meet the sufficient condition to function as sentence topics. However, if no such instantiation is available, a contrastive reading becomes possible. The two XP arguments or adjuncts are contrasted, and the clause under consideration has one of them move to the left periphery, in which case the original position in Mexican Spanish, in which their behavior is akin to that of presentational focus prominence is also satisfied.

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The multiple order of multiple topics is subject to thematic considerations.

Recall that both the reason and the locative adverbials have to move to the left because violation of *ADJUNCTION is unavoidable if both XPs are to be hosted in the left periphery. The ADJUNCTION constraint against adjoined *Pole/Reason adjuncts is ranked above the constraint against adjoined *Pole/Locative adjuncts. This is why candidate (57b), which places the reason adverbial in [Spec, I] loses because of its violation of *Pole/Reason. The winning candidate instead adjoins the reason adverbial to IP and makes the locative PP the Pole, which is the best option given the mandatory movement of *Pole/Reason. The winning candidate also adheres to the thematic hierarchy in (57b). As a result, the reason adverbial and the locative adverbial that identify the focus are moved to the left.

The multiple topicalization data also provide further support to my analyses in (53-59). The ranking in (52) equally accounts directly for all the contrasts presented in the cases (53-59), which introduce either a reason or a locative adjunct. The final decision then rests on the markedness constraint against the Pole Hierarchy, and so candidate (57b) loses because of its violation of *Pole/Reason. The winning candidate instead adjoins the reason adverbial to IP and makes the locative PP the Pole, which is the best outcome given this state of affairs. The multiple topicalization data not only provide further support to my analyses where the Pole is a position that can host fronted topics. These same facts also disconfirm alternative analyses where all fronted topics land in a position other than the Pole (i.e., the analysis in Goodall 2001; analyses where every topic is adjoined to IP as in Contreras 1991; or analyses where they land in the specifier of a multiple topic phrase, as in Rizzi 1997), since in these analyses it would go unexplained why a reason or a locative adjuncts move to the Pole. The reason is that the Pole Hierarchy is ranked above the constraint against adjoined *Pole/Reason, and so candidate (57b) loses because of its violation of *Pole/Reason.
Finally, the multiple topicalization facts also provide evidence against an alternative analysis of the unmarked word order in Mexican Spanish based on Alignment Constraints (McCarthy & Prince 1993). In such an alternative analysis, instead of having the markedness constraints in the Pole Hierarchy, it would be possible to derive a hierarchy of alignment constraints sensitive to semantic roles, as in (61).

\[
\text{ALIGN} (\text{AGENT-Left}) >> \text{ALIGN} (\text{EXPERIENCER-Left}) >> \text{S\_TAY} >> \text{ALIGN} (\text{THEME-Left}) >> ... 
\]

My proposal and the alternative Alignment proposal I have sketched out are not equivalent, though. The Alignment analysis makes a clear prediction: all else being equal, the agent will appear at the leftmost position in the clause. My proposal makes a different prediction: all else being equal, the agent will appear in the pole specifier, which will sometimes, but always, correspond to the topmost position in the hierarchical organization of constituents. The Alignment analysis makes a clear prediction: all else being equal, the agent must be aligned with the left edge of the clause, but S\_TAY, the constraint that penalizes syntactic displacement, can signal the cut-off point at which it is better to leave a constituent in its base position than to move it to the left edge to satisfy the corresponding alignment constraint. As can be seen in tableau (63), in the unmarked case VSO and OVS transitive sentences are ruled out because the agent subject is not Left-aligned with IP.

\[
\text{TRANSITIVE CLAUSES: UNMARKED WORD ORDER.} \\
\text{\textit{A girl bought the records} = (16) in \S 4.2.3.} \\
\text{INPUT: <buy (x, y), x=a girl (Ag), y=the records (Th)>}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{IP una muchacha compró VP t i los discos} & \text{SVO} & * \\
\text{b. } & \text{IP compró VP una muchacha los discos} & \text{VSO} & *! \\
\text{c. } & \text{IP los discos t los compró VP una muchacha} & \text{OVS} & *!
\end{align*}
\]

In the case of unaccusative sentences, the violation of S\_TAY that results from aligning the theme subject with the left edge of the IP proves fatal, and the winning candidate is the one where the subject stays in its VP-internal position, as I leave for the reader to verify. My proposal and the alternative Alignment proposal I have sketched out are not equivalent, though. The Alignment analysis makes a clear prediction: all else being equal, the agent will appear at the leftmost position in the clause. My proposal makes a different prediction: all else being equal, the agent will appear in the pole specifier, which will sometimes, but not always, correspond to the leftmost position in the clause.

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Alignment constraints are gradient constraints, so they can be violated more than once depending on the number of elements that intervene between the category to be aligned and the edge of the specified domain. For simplicity, in the tableaux that follow I do not represent the gradient violations of these constraints, since they will not be relevant for our discussion. Also, for simplicity violations of S\_TAY resulting from V-to-I movement are left out of the tableaux.
The proposed ranking of constraints for Mexican Spanish further explains why VSO and VOS sentences are ungrammatical in this variety of Spanish. Lastly, we have seen that data from multiple topicalization provide further support for this analysis.

In this section, I have shown how the proposal developed in §2 and §3 can be extended to account for perturbations of the unmarked word order that result from information structure considerations. We have seen that this focus-driven subject inversion in Spanish can be accounted for with the ranking FOCUS > ROMINENCE > EPP, and that this ranking can be explained by an economy of means principle, where sentence topics are fronted to a position other than the Pole and moved to the Pole specifier to satisfy TOPIC FIRST. Alternatives where topics are moved to other positions are ruled out because of Economy of Structure considerations. All else being equal, in this analysis, fronted topics simultaneously satisfy the EPP by virtue of moving to the Pole, and this explains why it is not necessary for the subject to move to Spec, I. When some other explanation is necessary, the subject is moved to Spec, I by some other constraint.

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