

The Word Order of Constructions with an Intransitive Verb, a Subject, and an Adverb in Spoken Spanish

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1. Introduction

1.1. *The issue*

In spoken Rioplatense Spanish, constructions with an intransitive verb, a subject, and an adverb exhibit word order variation, as seen in examples (1) to (5):

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| (1) | y el perro quedó ahí 9a25 ¹ and the dog stayed there and the dog stayed there | S V ADV |
| (2) | estaba ahí la tapa 17a29 it was there the lid the lid was there | V ADV S |
| (3) | está ese hueco ahí 14a20 is that hole there there is that hole over there | V S ADV |
| (4) | entonces uno de los vecinos se quejó 10a19 then one of the neighbors complained so one of the neighbors complained | ADV S V |
| (5) | después pasó un auto 26a4 then passed a car then a car passed by | ADV V S |

These word orders do not occur in free variation. Here I will present a correlation between these word orders and syntactic, cognitive, pragmatic, and prosodic factors, and I will indicate how these elements work together.

1.2. *Previous research*

There is no past research on the word order of this particular construction in Spanish. Formal works on word order rely on introspection: sentences tested for grammaticality or appropriateness in the context of questions created by the analyst (Contreras 1976, Zubizarreta 1998, 1999). If the researcher has good intuitions the results will be correct, but might not cover the whole range of possibilities present in discourse (Ocampo 2003b). Moreover, introspection on its own, without taking into consideration naturally occurring data, may yield inaccurate results.

Early works on Spanish word order utilizing naturally occurring data are Kahane and Kahane (1950), and Hatcher (1956). Both utilize examples from literary sources. The former also make use of

* I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for her/his comments and suggestions. Final responsibility is mine.

¹ The numbers and letter that appear after each example indicate its location in the corpus. Any example without them has been created by the author for expository purposes.

resource persons. Meaning is taken into consideration and some results are confirmed by later research. One problem is that at this early stage, attempts at generalization are necessarily tentative.

Works that utilize conversational data are Bentivoglio (1985), Bentivoglio and Weber (1986), and Silva-Corvalán (1977, 1983, 1984), which deal with the word order of the subject and the verb, and the object and the verb. These authors consider that word order in Spanish obeys syntactic, prosodic and discourse/pragmatic factors, which is also my approach. The results obtained point to the right direction. These works pioneered this mode of research in Spanish, and only a small number of sentence-types were accounted for.

1.3. *Subjects, data*

My analysis is based on 135 tokens taken from a corpus of 20 hours of informal conversations, with a total of 32 Rioplatense speakers from La Plata, Argentina. In some cases, the pragmatic and discourse factors that motivate the word order of a construction may not be apparent to a researcher not familiar with the details of the issues being discussed. I was present during the conversations, and the speakers involved are friends or relatives. Moreover, I transcribed this corpus in minute detail utilizing conversational notation. These factors allow me to perform a reliable data analysis.

Prosodic prominence has been ascertained impressionistically without discriminating if it is the result of intensity, length, pitch, or a combination of these factors. For each construction, three degrees of relative prominence have been distinguished, identified in the transcription as primary stress, secondary stress, and tertiary stress. Ideally, it would be preferable to utilize an acoustic analysis. Nevertheless, results are reliable. Notice that an acoustic analysis does not automatically tell where the main prominence falls. It deploys a series of factors that the analyst must interpret. Also, acoustic analysis is best done in an isolation chamber to filter outside noise that will appear in the diagrams. In my data, conversations were recorded in natural settings with outside noise, which the human ear can filter but the computer cannot. In any case, if prosodic prominence communicates anything, the hearer must perceive it. I am a native speaker of Spanish; the variety I am analyzing is my own variety: I am familiar with the speech of these persons. Consequently, I am in excellent position to perceive prosodic prominence.

As the number and type of constituents in the clause affect word order (Ocampo 1995a), I only considered constructions with a subject, a verb and an adverb. I did not take into account constructions containing additional constituents. In order to minimize hidden factors I only included declarative independent clauses. Also I excluded constructions with noun phrases which function like adverbs, like *los sábados* 'on Saturdays'. Moreover, I left out the negative adverbs *tampoco* 'neither', *nunca* 'never', and *nada* 'nothing', because they present particular problems which need further research.

1.4. *Hypothesis*

The different factors that correlate with word order operate on two levels. The first level includes cognitive factors some of which have grammaticalized and are now part of the morphology and syntax of Spanish. This level can be called cognitive-grammatical. The second level includes pragmatic-discourse factors and refers to the use of language in conversation. Both levels operate simultaneously. First, I will refer to cognitive and grammatical factors and I will state their correlation with word order. Then, I will convey how this word order is affected by pragmatic and discourse factors.

In the first level these constructions have two types of argument: a core argument and an oblique argument. The subject is considered a core argument because the relation between the noun phrase and the verb is present in the semantics of the verb. For example, subjects of transitive verbs do not behave as subjects of intransitive verbs with respect to word order. On the other hand, the relationship between the verb and the adverb is not determined by the semantics of the verb. This relationship is determined by the adverb. For this reason, the transitivity of the verb does not affect the word order behavior of adverbs. This is why the adverb is considered an oblique argument.

The subject, then, is a core argument and the factor that affects its word order is its topicality (Ocampo 2003b). Subjects of intransitive verbs appear in preverbal position when their topicality is high and in postverbal position when their topicality is low. Chafe (1976:50) expresses that "the topic

sets a spatial, temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds". Lambrecht (1994:127) states "A referent is interpreted as the topic of the proposition if in a given discourse the proposition is construed as being about this referent, i.e. as expressing information which is relevant to and which increases the addressee's knowledge of this referent." Notice that in addition of *topic* I utilize the label *topicality* to refer to this notion because this term allows establishing gradations, while *topic* refers to discrete categories. A cognitive factor associated with topicality is the assessment by the speaker of the status new or given of the referent in the mind of the hearer (Prince 1981). Noun phrases with high topicality have mostly given referents.

As previously stated, the adverb is an oblique argument. The factors that affect the word order of the adverb are adverb type and adverb function. I will refer first to adverb types that affect word order. The majority of the adverbs in the data appear in postverbal position when the pragmatic function of the sentence is to convey information only. I label this class *postverbal adverbs* (Ocampo 1995b, 2001). A subtype of this class is *immediately postverbal* adverbs. The members of this class that appear in various construction types in the corpus are listed in (6):

- (6) Immediately postverbal adverbs:
mal 'bad', *bien* 'well', *más* 'more', *mucho* 'a lot', *poco* 'little', *tanto* 'so much', *bastante* 'enough', *menos* 'less'.

These adverbs have two features. First, with some of them (*mucho*², *tanto*, *bastante*) it is not possible to place any item between the verb and the adverb; secondly, any adverb placed between the other adverbs (*mal*, *bien*, *más*, *poco*, *menos*) and the verb, will not modify the verb but the immediately postverbal adverb, forming a cluster, as shown in (7):

- (7) corre [espantosamente mal].
 runs awfully badly
 s/he runs awfully bad.

Notice that with the exclusion of *mal* and *bien*, the rest of the adverbs are quantifiers. Kovacci (1999) also finds that these quantifiers occupy an immediate postverbal position.

In the data, for constructions with an intransitive verb, a subject, and an adverb, there are no instances of different syntactic behavior between postverbal adverbs and immediately postverbal adverbs. For this reason in the remainder of this exposition I will merge both categories, and consider immediately postverbal adverbs as a subtype of postverbal adverbs.

The second class of adverbs that correlates with word order are aspectual adverbs, listed in (8):

- (8) Aspectual adverbs:
ya 'already', *todavía* 'still', *aun* 'still', *siempre* 'always', *casi* 'almost'.

These adverbs appear in preverbal position when the pragmatic function of the utterance is to convey information only. These adverbs convey aspect in their prototypical meaning. Comrie (1981:3) states that "aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation." Perfective aspect presents the totality of the situation as a single unanalyzable whole, whereas imperfective aspect makes reference to the internal temporary constituency of the situation. *Ya* indicates that a situation has been accomplished, or has started, at the moment of speaking. As this adverb presents the beginning or the end of a situation as a whole, it conveys perfective aspect.³ *Todavía* and *aún* stipulate that a situation has not been completed, or has not started, at the moment of speaking. *Casi* expresses that, although very near materialization, a situation has not been accomplished at the moment of speaking. *Siempre* conveys that a situation does not finish: it continues

² One exception of this is an utterance of the type *Juan trabaja muy mucho*, literally 'John works very a lot' that I have occasionally heard from uneducated rioplatense speakers.

³ The central meaning of *ya* is that of a discrete deictic marker. This meaning in combination with the context conveys a message of aspect. (A. Ocampo and F. Ocampo 2000).

or repeats itself. As these adverbs make reference to a situation in progress, they convey imperfective aspect (Ocampo 1995b).

A motivation for the preverbal position of these aspectual adverbs is presented in A. Ocampo (1999). She states that in Spanish the relationship between these adverbs and the verb is similar to the one that exists between an adjective and a noun. In general, adjectives appear after the noun in Spanish. However, an adjective may appear before the noun when it is an epithet: when the meaning that it conveys is also part of the meaning of the noun. (As, for example, in the construction *la blanca nieve* ‘the white snow’ because snow is prototypically white.) As aspect is an inherent component of the verb, aspectual adverbs behave like epithets and they appear in preverbal position. What remains unexplained is why epithets appear preverbally.

Word order also correlates with two adverb functions. The most frequent function in the data is *link* (Ocampo 1995b, 2001). The function of link relates the proposition of the sentence to the previous context, as exemplified in (9):

- (9) Un:, un hombre puso () hizo una cancha de pelota paleta () en un terreno. () **Ento^nces u'no de los veci''nos se quejó'**, le hizo un juicio porque dice que le molestaba. 10a19⁴

A a man put () built a racket court () on a lot. () **So one of the neighbors complained**, he sued him because he said it annoyed him.

Here the adverb *entonces* links the sentence to the previous context. It indicates that the content of the proposition has a relation of consequence with the previous context. Although this notion of link is not a class but a function and, given the appropriate context, any adverb can be a link, in the data there are adverbs which appear more frequently as links because of their meaning: *además* ‘besides’, *después* ‘afterwards’, *entonces* ‘then’, *luego* ‘later’. Contreras (1976:60) postulates a class of constituents: *adjuncts* that comprises some subclasses, one of them being *sentence relators*, which have the function described above. Notice that in this subclass Contreras includes not only adverbs but also prepositional phrases and idiomatic clauses.

The second adverbial function that correlates with word order is *sentential adverb* (Barrenechea 1977, Ifantidou-Trouki 1993). When an adverb has this function it appears in preverbal position. These adverbs are not in construction with the verb but with the whole sentence. In her categorization of adverbs according to their function, Kovacci (1999:737) distinguishes *frame adverbs* that set a temporal or a spatial frame with respect to the whole predication. She notes the preverbal position of these adverbs when they are external to the predicate. In my data, sentential adverbs are not restricted to temporal or spatial ones.⁵

In the data, the aforementioned aspectual adverbs, and the two adverb functions, link and sentential, have the same syntactic behavior. For this reason I consider this adverb-type and these two functions together under the label *preverbal adverb*.

⁴The conventions utilized in the transcription are as follows. A single bracket '[' between two utterances indicates that they overlap. The sign '≡' marks partial overlapping between the end of a turn and the beginning of another. Utterances appear between parentheses when I am not sure of the accuracy of the transcription. Three periods between parentheses '(...)' mean that it was impossible to ascertain what the speaker said. Three periods between square brackets '[...]' indicate that data is omitted. A hiatus of any kind in the speech flow is marked by '-'. A pause is indicated by parentheses '()'. A number between parentheses '(1.4)' shows the length of the pause (in seconds and tenths of seconds). Words or utterances underlined mark that this portion is perceived as salient (strong primary stress, or high pitch, or uttered with a louder voice, etc.). Lengthening is indicated by ':' after a vowel or a consonant. The symbol ' stands for primary stress, " stands for secondary stress, ^ for tertiary stress. Any additional information appears between square brackets '[risas]'. The construction relevant for the analysis is shown in bold characters. Last names have been changed to protect privacy.

⁵ Kovacci (1999) also describes other types of adverbs that have this sentential function, but she lists them under various categories (i.e. external to the dictum, modus adverbs.)

Also, adverbs may modify only one of the other two constituents, forming a cluster with it. In the data, there are two adverbs that, because of their meaning they always form a cluster. I call them *right scope adverbs* (Ocampo 2001), listed in (10):

- (10) right scope adverbs:
sólo ‘only’, *medio* ‘a bit’.

All of these factors mentioned before operate simultaneously with a discourse-pragmatic factor. These factors correlate with word order when the pragmatic function of the utterance is to convey information only. This is to be understood in a very broad sense as *communicating something*. This pragmatic function and the corresponding word order can be considered unmarked. Conveying information is the pragmatic function present in the majority of the constructions in the data: 99/135 constructions, 73.34% (see Table 1 below). I label *informational word order* the word order that has the pragmatic function of conveying information only. When a construction, besides conveying information, has an additional pragmatic function, it experiences a variation in its informational word order. There is also a prosodic factor, main prominence. This factor correlates (although not exclusively) with focus (Ocampo 2003a), defined in terms of center of attention.

In the data there are two pragmatic functions: *contrast*, and *deviation from expectation*. Both pragmatic functions are messages that the hearer infers from the word order and the proposition of the construction, prosodic prominence, and the context. A contrastive constituent stands in opposition to a closed number of alternatives, members of the same semantic set. What is asserted is which candidate is the correct one (Chafe 1976, Silva-Corvalán 1983). The other alternatives of the set must be identifiable. An utterance expresses deviation from expectation when, besides conveying information, it conveys a message not expected, given the previous discourse, knowledge of the world or the culture, knowledge of the other discourse participants, etc. It may also deny an assumption that the speaker attributes to the hearer. (Ocampo 1995a).

Table 1

| InfoWordOrd | StopVADVpost | ADVprevStopV | ADVrsStopV | VSADVpost | ADVprevVS | total |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| tokens | 32/50 | 12/23 | 2/2 | 16/19 | 37/41 | 99/135 |
| percent | 64% | 52.17% | 100% | 84.21% | 90.24% | 73.34% |
| Topic backgr | VADVpostStop | ADVprevVStop | | | | |
| tokens | 6/50 | 8/23 | | | | 14/135 |
| percent | 12% | 34.78% | | | | 10.37% |
| Subj contrast | StopVADVpost | | | | | |
| tokens | 6/50 | | | | | 6/135 |
| percent | 12% | | | | | 4.45% |
| ADVcontrast | | ADVprevVStop | | | ADVprevVS | |
| tokens | | 1/23 | | | 2/41 | 3/135 |
| percent | | 4.35% | | | 4.88% | 2.22% |
| Dev expect | VStopADVpost | StopVADVprev | | | | |
| tokens | 2/50 | 1/23 | | | | 3/135 |
| percent | 4% | 4.35% | | | | 2.22% |
| Change of m | ADVpostVStop | | | | | |
| tokens | 2/50 | | | | | 2/135 |
| percent | 4% | | | | | 1.48% |
| Cluster tok | 1/50 | 1/23 | | 3/19 | | 5/135 |
| percent | 2% | 4.35% | | 15.79% | | 3.70% |
| Unclear tok | 1/50 | | | | 2/41 | 3/135 |
| percent | 2% | | | | 4.88% | 2.22% |
| total | 50/135 | 23/135 | 2/135 | 19/135 | 41/135 | 135/135 |
| percent | 37.04% | 17.04% | 1.48% | 14.07% | 30.37% | 100% |

I will first show how the factors of topicality, adverb class and adverb function correlate with informational word order when the pragmatic function of the utterance is to convey information only.

Then I will show how each informational word order changes when a construction with these factors correlates with additional pragmatic and discourse factors.

The word orders present in the data, together with the tokens, percentages, and the factors that motivate them are shown in Table 1, above.

2. Constructions with a topical subject and a postverbal adverb

As seen in Table 1, a construction with a subject with high topicality and a postverbal adverb has an S V ADV informational word order. This construction is exemplified in (11). Speakers are remembering the problem they had with a big and unruly dog when they were forced to move to a smaller home. They state that they had to leave the dog temporarily in the old home.

(11) S topical V ADV postverbal

L: cuando nosotros nos mudamos en 64 y 2 () teníamos un perro () terrible ¿no? terrible [...] había sido chiquitito cuando lo trajeron, pero se vino tan grande, [...] era brusco, bestia [...] y bueno () no - teníamos mucho terreno de donde vivíamos antes

M: allá en frente a plaza Matheu teníamos mucho lugar

L: [pero cuando nos fuimos a 64 () no podíamos resolver ese día todo, nos mudamos y **el perro quedó ahí**'. 9a27

L: when we moved, in the corner of 2th and 64th () we had a dog () horrible, see, horrible [...] when they brought him home he was small, but he became so big [...] he was gruff, a beast [...] and well, we didn't have much space where we moved

M: in our former house facing Matheu Square we had plenty of space

L: [but when we moved to 64th Street () we couldn't solve that problem that day, we moved and **the dog remained there**.

Here the sentence is about the dog. Its referent is given and it receives secondary stress. Primary prosodic prominence falls on the focus, the adverb. In my corpus, topical subjects with given referents tend to receive secondary stress (Ocampo 2003b). Also in the informational word order for this construction-type, the majority of topical subject referents are given 30/32, 93.75%.

The construction-type exemplified in (11) may appear in the data with the topical constituent backgrounded (see Table 1). Speakers may express different grades of saliency by utilizing word order and morphology (Ocampo 2003b). As a topic is naturally salient, the unmarked case is when it occupies a preverbal position. Speakers may choose to make a topical referent less salient by uttering the lexical NP in last position. Topical NPs in final sentence position have been referred to in the literature as *right dislocated* (Zubizarreta 1998), or as *antitopics* (Lambrecht 1994). Taking into consideration their diminished saliency, I will call them *backgrounded topics*.

A construction with a backgrounded topic and a postverbal adverb exhibits a V ADV S word order, as exemplified in (12):

(12) V ADV postverbal S topical backgrounded

M: ¿aquí está la tapa Juan? Aquí yo tenía - aquí está la tapa, adentro del baño=

J: =a:h **estaba ahí** (la tapa). 17a29

M: Is the lid there, Juan? here I had - here is the lid, in the bathroom=

J: =Ah **there was (the lid)**.

Notice that the referent of the lid continues to be what the sentence is about, but is less important. Speaker J wants to convey his surprise at the location of the lid. In all construction-types in the data, with the exception of only one example, backgrounding the subject triggers main prominence on the

constituent immediately preceding it, in this case the adverb. In (12) backgrounding the subject seems to be exploited by the speaker to focalize the adverb.

A constituent that appears in first position and receives primary stress, placed in the appropriate discourse context may be interpreted as contrastive. In the construction-type exemplified in (11) a sentence with a contrastive topical subject does not result in word order change, as seen in (13) (cf. Table 1):

(13) **S topical contrastive V ADV postverbal**

ella () ella venía acá, hablaba por teléfono () pestes del marido pero vos no sabés eh () quién es el que tiene la culpa. Porque ella se fue de la casa () se llevó todos los muebles () se llevó todo () pero **el ho'mbre si'gue vivie^ndo acá'** 9b19

she () she used to come here, she used our phone () to badmouth her husband but you don't know () whom to blame. Because she left her home () she took all the furniture () she took everything () but **the man continues living here**

In this example, the man, who stayed in the home, stands in opposition to the woman, who left. The subject receives main prosodic prominence. Notice that other factors may trigger additional primary stresses on other constituents, but the contrastive constituent always receives primary stress. Observe that it is the context that makes it possible to interpret the first constituent with a primary stress as a contrastive one.

In the data there are two examples of the construction-type exemplified in (11), which exhibit a V S ADV word order, and primary stress on the verb and on the adverb. In both cases the speaker exploits this combination to convey deviation from expectation (see Table 1). In (14) the speaker talks about her mother's car which is regularly stolen but is so unreliable that thieves abandon it a few blocks from her home:

(14) **V S topical ADV postverbal**

V: una vez me acuerdo que hasta fue a hacer la denuncia. [...] a ver, esa vez por qué fue

F: sería la primera vez.

V: claro. () Y y creo que era () claro, creo que ella suponete se dio cuenta () una mañana que yo no esta:ba, o una cosa así [...] entonces se levantó y fue a hacer la denuncia. Cuando yo volví, o al día siguiente, yo no me acuerdo bien cómo fue. Al día siguiente ¡ay nena, te enteraste, me robaron el auto! () Salí a buscarlo y era la vez que había - que estaba a d dos cuadras para allá, viste. ¡Ay porque hice la denuncia, qué sé yo!, **esta'ba el a''uto ahí nomá's**, o sea ni se le había ocurrido que podía ir a buscarlo, te das cuenta? Ella, hizo la denuncia que se lo habían robado. 12b3

V: I remember once that she even filed a report in the police station [...] let's see, that time, why she did it

F: may be it was the first time.

V: yes. () And and I think that it was () yes, I think that she realized that () one mornig I was not there, something like that [...] so she woke up and went to file a report. When I came back, or the next day, I don't remember well how was it. Next day, oh gosh girl, my car was stolen! () I went out to look for it and it was the time that it was – it was two blocks in that direction, you see. Oh gosh, I filed a report with the police! **The car was nearby**, it didn't occur to her thar she could go look for it, you see? She filed a report that the car was stolen.

Primary stress falls on the verb and the adverbial phrase, the two centers of attention. They convey the information that the car was no longer missing and its location was near home. Both pieces of information within this context convey the notion of contrary to expectation.

Sometimes the combination of the meanings of a particular verb and a particular adverb with a particular word order produces an idiosyncratic message. In view of these circumstances it is difficult to generalize, because the ordering seems to be directly related to the message in an obscure manner.

There are two instances in the data of this particular combination, both with the same verb (see Table 1). One of these instances is shown in (15):

- (15) **ADV postverbal V S topical backgrounded**
 un hornito. El otro día me estaba acordando del: la - lámpara que le compré, en el año
 cuarentitrés [...] cuarentitrés años, y **ahí está' () la lá'mpara a carbó'n** 14b25

a little oven. The other day I was remembering the – the carbon lamp I bought for it, it was in
 the year 43 [...] forty three years, and **there it is () the the carbon lamp**

The meaning of this construction appears with more clarity if we contrast this order with the corresponding informational word order:

- (16) **S topical V ADV postverbal**
 La lámpara a carbón está ahí.
 the lamp of carbon is there
 The carbon lamp is over there

which conveys only a locative meaning. The message of *ahí está la lámpara a carbón*, ‘there it is, the carbon lamp’ in the context of (15) is that this particular bulb had survived for over forty three years. It seems that the combination of the deictic adverb and the verb *estar* with the word order ADV V supports various message types, depending on the context. Notice that backgrounding the topical subject highlights the verb, and lowers the importance of the subject, contributing to the message.

One factor that affects word order is the behavior of some postverbal adverbs that modify exclusively either the verb or the subject, forming a cluster with it (see Table 1). In (17) there is a case in which the adverb clusters with the verb:

- (17) **S topical [ADV postverbal V]**

V: hace: - siete años, () este: () fuimos - e habíamos planificado ir con u - otro amigo, a: a: a pasar unos días en carpa al: - al río Salado, a:: General Belgrano

[...]

F: ¿fue donde: ahí donde Juan Carlos dijo que: una vez quisieron ir al mar y: se llenaron todos de mosquitos? () ¿fue ahí?

V: ah, no sé de qué de - no [...] no, porque aparte - de ahí al mar e hay bastante=

F: =ah hay bastante?

[

V: (¿no es cierto?) y claro, General Belgrano está t n en el - no te digo en el medio, pero está - bastante lejos del mar. [...] pero nosotros estábamos en General Belgrano, **el Sala'do después si'gue:**, y llega hasta el mar [...] pero nosotros estábamos mucho más adentro, 12b13

V: seven years ago () we went – er we had planned to go with a a friend to: to: to spend some days camping to - to the Salado river, to General Belgrano

[...]

F: Was it there where Juan Carlos said that once you wanted to reach the sea and you were annoyed by lots of mosquitos? () was it there?

V: ah I don't know what you are t - no [...] no, because - from there to the sea, it's a long way =

F: =ah, it's a long way?

[

V: (isnt'it?) yes, General Belgrano is located in the - I wouldn't say in the middle [of the Province] but is is - far away from the sea. [...] but we were at General Belgrano, **the Salado river continues afterwards** and it reaches the sea [...] but we were much more inland,

As the subject is topical it appears in first place. The adverb excludes the subject. This exclusive modification of the verb helps to convey the inference that this river reaches the sea but only after covering a long distance.

3. Constructions with a topical subject and a preverbal adverb

In (18) we can see that constructions with an adverb that functions as a link, and a topical subject have an ADV S V informational word order (cf. Table 1). Speaker P is commenting on a group of his workmates who avoid workplace and family duties and go fishing instead.

(18) ADV preverbal S topical V

P: los tipos () tienen entonces el mismo problema familiar. De que en las casas los t no los tipos tienen () la mayoría tienen () todas hijas mujeres () y: la mujer tampoco la soportan. Ninguno soporta, ni a la mujer ni a las hijas mujeres.

S: ni a las sue:gras () ni a las suegras

[

P: claro, ni a las sue:gras, a las herma:nas tienen todos - todo en la casa.

F: he he he he

P: **ento^nces to''dos se va'n**, se juntan los tres () y cuando consiguen una comisión [...] (con el pretexto) se van de la casa y dicen me voy de comisión y se van a pesca:r 22b5

P: those guys () then have the same problem at home. At home the g don't the guys have () most of them have () only daughters () and and they can't stand the wife either. None of them stands neither the wife nor the daughters

S: nor the mothers in law () nor the mothers in law

[

P: yes, nor the mothers in law, the sisters, they have all - they have all that at home.

F: ha ha ha ha

P: **so all of them leave**, they get together, the three of them () and when they get a field work [...] (with that pretext) they leave home and they say I have field work and they go fishing

Notice that the subject is the topic of the sentence and the adverb links the proposition to the previous discourse context. Primary prosodic prominence falls on the focus, the verb. As statistically predicted (Ocampo 2003b), secondary stress falls on the topic with a given referent. For the informational word order of this construction-type, the majority of the topical subject referents in the data are given: 9/12 75%.

Constructions with a backgrounded topical subject have an ADV V S word order (cf. Table 1), as in (19), where speaker L is reporting a telephone conversation:

(19) ADV preverbal V S topical backgrounded

L: Entonces me dijo mañana vamos a ir donde Pepa, le dije bueno mirá () yo () si hablo de Pepa () no le voy a decir que vos vas a ir.

[...]

M: porque por ahí no podía ir y **despué^s se ilusiona'ba Pe''pa**. 13a10

L: Then she said tomorrow we are going to visit Pepa, I told her ok look () I () if I call Pepa () I am not telling her that you are going to see her tomorrow.

[...]

M: because may be she couldn't go and **then Pepa may get false expectations**.

The adverb functions here as a link, and the subject referent is present in the previous context. Notice, as stated before, that when the subject is backgrounded the verb receives primary stress. In this case the verb is the focus: the most important piece of information (Ocampo 2003a).

In the data there is one case of this construction-type with a contrastive adverb (see Table 1). It is part of an oral narrative where the speaker tells the story of a friend whose car was robbed, and he looked for it in the suburbs, where usually stolen cars are abandoned, but he found it instead in a popular square, in downtown:⁶

(20) **ADV link contrastive V S topical backgrounded**

lo empezaron a buscar, a buscar, primero empezaron por la periferia, no, en la Plaza Italia estaba. [...] pero viste que la plaza tiene [...] en el medio tiene un:a calle, para estacionar. Ahí' esta^ba el a^uto. 12b4

they started the search, first they started in the periphery, no, it was on Plaza Italia [...] but you see that the square has [...] it has in the middle a space to park. **It was there where the car was.**

In this example the speaker utilizes the deictic adverb to contrast the location where her friend found his car, downtown, with the location where he expected to find it: the suburbs. The adverb appears in first position and receives primary stress. Notice that the speaker also backgrounds the topical subject to increase the saliency of the adverb. In the resulting word order the adverb conveys a contrastive meaning.

There is one case in the data where the corresponding informational word order: ADV preverbal S topical V shows a variation: S V ADV (cf. Table 1). This is seen in (21):

(21) **S topical V ADV preverbal**

Gabriela lo fue a ver una vez que fue:, y ahora, últimamente fue la chica de: (1.4) C Carapelli. A la que - ¿se acuerda Carapelli? Al - **Ali''ne está' todaví''a.** Lo que pasa es que estuvo de lice:ncia. 6b20

Gabriela went to visit him when she traveled there, and now, lately this girl (1.4) C Carapelli went. The one who - do you remember Carapelli? Al - **Aline is still** [with us]. But she is on leave.

This conversation takes place between two French instructors. One of them has left the institution and the other one is telling his interlocutor what his former colleagues have been doing. He is naming the instructors who went to Paris and paid a visit to a former director of the institution. He then names another instructor who went to Paris and denies the assumption that she has left the institution. We see, then, that in this context, the construction conveys deviation from expectation. The adverb *todavía* is an aspectual adverb (listed in (8)), that in informational word order appears preverbally. Similarly with topic backgrounding, placing a preverbal adverb in a postverbal position is accompanied by a primary stress on the verb. Notice that here it is the verb which conveys the crucial information and is the focus of the denial.

4. Constructions with a topical subject and a right scope adverb

A construction with a right scope adverb is exemplified in (22) (cf. Table 1). Here the speaker is talking about the restoration of an old picture:

(22) **[ADV right scope S topical] V**

estaban - [só'lo las lí'neas] esta''ban, entonces con acuarela lo pintó: 16b11

there were - **only the the lines remained**, so he painted it with watercolor

⁶ Notice that in Argentina the suburbs are usually the poorest neighborhoods where most crime is committed.

In this case the adverb exclusively modifies the subject and it forms a cluster with it. This can be seen more clearly if we contrast this order with the one created in (23) (with prosodic prominence on the verb), where the adverb modifies just the verb:

(23) **S topical [ADV right scopeV]**

El dibujo era simbólico. Todos los elementos comunicaban algo, salvo dos líneas que había puesto a la derecha, totalmente inútiles. **Las lí^{''}neas [sólo esta[']ban]**, no agregaban nada al mensaje. Le dije que las sacara.

The drawing was symbolic. Every element in it communicated something, except for two lines that he had put on the right side, totally useless. **The lines only stayed there**, they added nothing to the message. I told him to take them out.

5. Constructions with a non-topical subject and a postverbal adverb

Table 1 shows that constructions with a non-topical subject and a postverbal adverb have an informational word order V S ADV, as exemplified in (24):

(24) **V S non-topical ADV postverbal**

Los límites también los pongo yo. Tal vez él los ponga en otro momento o en otras circunstancias viste, por ejemplo, **vie[']ne un chico acá!** (0.4) Tonces yo lo dejo que toque. Total, a mí qué me importa que esas cucharas de bronce, las toquen. Él no. ¡Eso no se toca!
19b4

I also put the limits. Sometimes he also puts them in another moment or in different circumstances, you see, for example, **a boy comes here**. (0.4) I let him touch. What do I care if he touches these bronze spoons. Not him. Don't touch that!

Here that the referent of the subject is not topical. It is introduced in the discourse by the speaker. Differently with constructions with topical subjects, here the number of new subject referents is higher: 7/16, 43.75%. This construction may be utilized to introduce brand-new referents (Prince 1981), as is the case in (24).

As previously stated, adverbs may modify just one of the other two constituents and form a cluster with it. This may be utilized to exploit diverse communicative needs. This is shown in (25), a construction with a non-topical subject and a postverbal adverb (cf. Table 1):

(25) **[V ADV postverbal] S non-topical**

no:, che, **está acá" esta pi pi'la de li:'bros**, esta casa es un despiole, () no porque está es este: () tengo la mitad de las cosas acá, la mitad de las cosas allá. Y esto es de una biblioteca que - se donó a la Alliance. Estaban por tirar los libros. Entonces yo salí - al rescate. 11a8

no, man, **there is this pile of books**, this house is a mess, () no because there is this () I have half of my things here, half of my things there. And this is from a library that - was given to the Alliance. They were going to throw the books away. So I came - to the rescue.

Here the postverbal adverb forms a cluster with the verb. If we compare this construction with the corresponding informational word order *está esta pila de libros acá* 'this pile of books is here' we see that the latter conveys locative meaning only. In (25), on the other hand, the central issue is not the spatial location of the books with respect to the participants, but the fact that they are stored in a pile on the floor and not on bookshelves. The goal of the speaker is to minimize the perception of disorder by explaining to her guests the cause of it. It looks as if the final position, plus prosodic prominence on the two nouns highlights the subject, which becomes the focus of the construction.

6. Constructions with a non-topical subject and a preverbal adverb

Example (26) shows the informational word order of constructions with a non-topical subject and an adverb that functions as a link: ADV V S (cf. Table 1). Here the speaker is talking about a car problem they had the previous day:

- (26) **ADV preverbal V S non-topical**
 pero se volvió a parar () se se volvió a a a ato:r. () Y e:ste bueno **despué's pasó'' un a'uto**,
 () y: el muchacho comprendió:, lo ayudó:, lo em:pujó bastante ra:to y así pudimos llegar
 hasta: acá, 26a4

but it stopped again () it it became cl clogged again. () And well, **then a car passed by**, ()
 a:nd the young man understood, he helped him, he pushed a car for a long time and we were
 able to reach home.

We can see that the adverb *después* ‘then’ links temporally the proposition with the previous context. Also, the subject is not topical: its referent is introduced by the speaker.

In this construction-type there are two tokens of a contrastive preverbal adverb (see Table 1), as shown in (27):

- (27) **ADV preverbal contrastive V S non-topical**

L: nena ¿por qué no se van al cuartito del fondo?

A: sí=

F: =sí. Ah, **ahí' da el so''l** 13a1

L: girl, why don't you two go to the little room in the back?

A: yes=

F: =yes. Ah, **there the sun shines**

This conversation is taking place in the kitchen. Speaker F contrasts the location of the sunny room with the kitchen, which receives no sunlight at that time. Notice that also the adverb links the construction with the previous L's utterance.

7. Unexplained cases

Looking at Table 1 we see that there are three cases whose word order I am not able to explain. The first one concerns a construction with a topical subject and a postverbal adverb, shown in (28):

- (28) **S topical ADV postverbal V**

N: ¿y Polo va:? () ¿Polo va? No

F: no, mirá, como ellos no:: en un principio

E: [dice que no se han podido comunicar porque si: **Patri'cia ayer pasó'**
 y tampoco esta:ban. 7a11

N: And does Polo go? () does Polo go? No

F: well, no. Look, since they didn't - from the outset

E: [he says that they couldn't get in touch because, well,
Patricia went [to their home] **yesterday** and they weren't there either.

There is no indication in the context that the construction has an additional pragmatic function. Also, there is no clear evidence that the adverb clusters with one of the other two constituents. Therefore, the explanation presented in Table 1 predicts that this construction-type, in a context where the only

pragmatic function present is to convey information, will have an ordering **Subject topical Verb Adverb postverbal**: *Patricia pasó ayer*. The referent of *Patricia* is situationally evoked (Prince 1981): the referent is present during this conversation. It could be argued that this is not really a simple sentence but a subordinate causal clause headed by the conjunction *porque*. Therefore it should be eliminated since it is not the same construction-type, and there might be other unknown syntactic factors present that could affect word order. On the other hand, the causal connection is not clear: notice that *porque* is followed by a lengthened *si*:. It looks as if the speaker has made up her mind and has started a new construction. In any case, the word order remains unexplained.

The other two unclear cases involve the same construction-type: preverbal adverb, verb and non-topical subject, shown in (29) and (30):

(29) **V ADV preverbal (aspectual) S non-topical**

E: no: si fue una locura hacerlo.

L: cuando lo estábamos terminando, **i'ba llega'ndo ya" dicie'mbre** () y claro, con el calor, viste, yo siempre me pongo así a:y eso no lo voy a terminar y si no lo termino para presentarlo a la exposición () ¿qué significa? 16a7

E: it was pure madness to do it.

L: when we were finishing it, **December was already arriving** () and, well, with the heat, you see I always get very nervous, oh I will not finish it in time and if I can't finish it to present it at the exhibition () what will happen?

The discourse topic of this example is a piece of cloth that speaker L had designed and was weaving for an exhibition, when she was young. The pragmatic function of this construction only conveys information, as there is nothing, either in the context or in my knowledge of the situation as a participant that would suggest otherwise. Therefore, the word order should have been **ADV prev V S non-topical**: *ya iba llegando diciembre*. If speaker L would have wanted to convey a message of immediacy, then she would have stated: *iba llegando diciembre ya* (with primary stress on the adverb) (Ocampo 1995b). This last variation needs a particular context because there is a potential contradiction between the message of immediacy conveyed by postverbal *ya* and the durative aspect conveyed by the verbal form. In any case, the word order of (29) remains unexplained.

In (30) speaker M explains to F the format of a political debate that will take place on television:

(30) **V ADV preverbal (link) S non-topical**

M: hace ta:nto que están hablando de e:so que:

F: pero ¿qué va a ser?, ¿como, un bedet? () ¿cómo (...) un un: () debate?, ¿en dónde?

L: en televisión

[

M: en televisión. () En un estudio de televisión.

[

F: a:h () en televisión.

M: así como fue cuando los enfrentaron a Sa:di y a: Caputto por Las Malvi:nas.

L: Las Malvinas. A:y fue a:lgo

[

M: **está' despué^s el moderado:'r**, está: el público, las ba la parte: e: los hinchas bah digamos. 16b15

M: there is such a long time they are talking about it, that:

F: but what will that be? Like a debit? () like (...) a a: () debate? where?

L: on tv

[

M: on tv. () In a tv studio.

[

F: ah () on tv.

M: similarly when Sadi and Caputo debated the Falkland issue.

L: the Falkland. That was something

M: [**then you have the moderator**, you have the audience, the part hum
the fans, let's say.

In this context, the adverb *después* functions as a link and the subject has low topicality. Consequently, my hypothesis predicts that the word order should be **ADV link V S non-topical**: *después está el moderador*. If speaker M were interested in state the location of a topical subject, the order should have been S topical V ADV postverbal: *el moderador está después*. The word order of (30) remains unexplained.

8. Conclusions

The six combinatory possibilities of the constituents S V ADV are present in the data. Table 2 below, presents these six word orders, the different construction-types that share the same word order, the pragmatic function conveyed, and the number of the example which illustrates each particular case.

Table 2

| word order | construction-type | discourse/pragmatic function | examples |
|------------|---|------------------------------|--------------|
| S V ADV | S topical V ADV postverbal | convey information | (1)/(11) |
| | S topical contrastive V ADV postverbal | contrast | (13) |
| | S topical V ADV preverbal | deviation from expectation | (21) |
| S ADV V | S topical [ADV postverbal V] | convey information | (17) |
| | S topical ADV postverbal V | unexplained | (28) |
| ADV S V | ADV preverbal S topical V | convey information | (4)/(9) (18) |
| | [ADV right scope S topical] V | convey information | (22) |
| ADV V S | ADV preverbal V S non-topical | convey information | (5)/(26) |
| | ADV preverbal V S topical | topic backgrounded | (19) |
| | ADV preverbal contrastive V S topical | contrast, topic backgrounded | (20) |
| | ADV preverbal contrastive V S non-topical | contrast | (27) |
| | ADV postverbal V S topical | change of meaning | (15) |
| V ADV S | V ADV postverbal S topical | topic backgrounded | (2)/(12) |
| | [V ADV postverbal] S non-topical | convey information | (25) |
| | V ADV preverbal S non-topical | unexplained | (29), (30) |
| V S ADV | V S non-topical ADV postverbal | convey information | (3), (24) |
| | V S topical ADV postverbal | deviation from expectation | (14) |

We can see that the situation is quite complex. There is no one-to-one correlation between word order, construction-type, and pragmatic function conveyed. A particular word order may be motivated by various construction-types that convey different pragmatic functions in conversation.

Taking into consideration Table 1, Table 2, and the examples presented, it is possible to sketch some generalizations. In all cases topical subjects appear in preverbal position and non-topical ones are postverbal. Moving⁷ a topical subject to the last position backgrounds it and highlights the previous constituent. (With the exception of constructions with a contrastive adverb.) Contrastive constituents appear first and receive main prosodic prominence. The message of deviation from expectation seems to be achieved by moving a topical subject to an immediately postverbal position or by placing a preverbal adverb in last position. Notice that these inferences (contrast, deviation from expectation) are not automatic: they need the appropriate context. There are also two instances of orderings that convey idiosyncratic meaning, and are difficult to generalize. Also, the fact that the adverb may modify only one of the constituents forming a cluster with it, affects word order. Finally, the hypothesis is

⁷ This *movement* metaphor has explanatory purposes only. I am not assuming any theoretical position here.

supported by the majority of the data, only the word order of 3/135 constructions, 3.7%, remains without an adequate explanation.

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